LETTERS FROM THE NEAR EAST

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MAURICE · BARING

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1909 AND 1912

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BY

MAURICE BARING

AUTHOR OF 'WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MANCHURIA,' 'LANDMARKS IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE,' ETC., ETC.

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TO

GEORGE GRAHAME

NOTE.

My thanks are due to the Editors of the 'Times' and the 'Morning Post' for kindly allowing me to republish these letters.—M. B.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	11
OPENING OF THE NEW RÉGIME . . .	39
THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK	53
THE SULTAN'S VISIT TO EYOUB . . .	68
FUTURE PROSPECTS	79
DISSATISFACTION WITH THE NEW RÉGIME	89
BULGARIA IN PRESENCE OF WAR . .	101
WITH THE SERVIANS	119
CONSTANTINOPLE DURING THE WAR . .	142
THE CHOLERA AT SAN STEFANO . . .	162

PREFACE

THIS book consists partly of letters written from Constantinople in 1909 to the *Morning Post*, and partly of letters written from the Balkans during the war of 1912 to *The Times*.

I

The letters to the *Morning Post*, which were written during and after the counter-revolution of 1909, are here republished without one word of alteration, 'with all their imperfections on their head.' Where I made mistakes I have left them. They are not the letters of an expert. They are the letters of a man who had never been to the Near East before, who knew little or nothing about

the Balkan States, the history of the Turks, or the complicated conditions of political and social life at Constantinople.

When I arrived at Constantinople, at the end of April 1909, I found all the local foreign opinion, and especially the local English opinion, in a ferment of enthusiasm for the Young Turks, and in a tumult of indignation against the English government, and its representatives at Constantinople, for the lukewarm support that they were said to be giving to the new movement and the new régime.

I arrived at Constantinople with a perfectly blank mind as to the merits of the case. I cared neither one way nor the other. I had no preconceived notions, and no theories on the subject. My business was simply to keep my eyes open and to write down my impressions of what I saw: *choses vues*. I started, as will

be seen from the letters that I wrote, with every desire to be as enthusiastic about the new régime, and as hopeful and confident, as my fellow-countrymen whom I met in Constantinople. The five letters that I here reprint, written in 1909, tell the story of a gradual disillusionment. They begin by being enthusiastic, and then, little by little, enthusiasm gives way to scepticism, scepticism to doubt, and, finally, doubt to disbelief. After five weeks, I left Turkey, and I did not return thither until the autumn of 1912, when the war was already in full swing. I found on returning that my scepticism had been justified by facts, and that in the space of four years, the new régime of the Young Turks, and the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress, which had been hailed so joyfully by the Liberals of Europe, and which

had raised such high hopes in the breasts of all lovers and defenders of freedom and of constitutionalism, had succeeded in bringing the Ottoman Empire to the very brink of ruin.

Since these letters were written the Young Turks have come once more into power and appear to be bent on dealing the *coup de grâce* or the *coup de Bourse* (the two are synonymous) to their dying Empire, and they seem to be desirous of crowning their long and discreditable record of incompetent statesmanship by one final act of folly.

The experiment made by the Young Turks, and its failure to restore order and to inaugurate progress in the Ottoman Empire, raises a question of immense general interest, and of particular importance to the English people. The British Empire includes large dominions

inhabited by Moslims, and ever since the Russo-Japanese war, in all the Moslim countries which are under British sway, there have been movements and agitations in favour of Western methods of government, constitutionalism, and self-government. There has been a cry of 'Egypt for the Egyptians,' and of 'India for the Indians,' and in some cases this cry has been supported and punctuated by bombs and assassination. Now the question which arises is this: Is it possible to pour the new wine into the old bottles? Is it possible to graft on to Oriental habits the modes of thought, the systems and forms of government of the West? Can Eastern and Moslim countries govern themselves according to Western ideas? Is constitutional government possible in the East? At first sight, recent events in Turkey seem to have answered the

question finally, and once for all, in the negative; but on looking closer into the question, we find that this is not so really; for during the period in which Turkey was at the mercy of the Committee of Union and Progress, there was in Turkey never for one moment the shadow of anything like constitutional government or Western methods—there was, in fact, merely a different and equally ruthless form of despotism. Turkish administration went on exactly as it had done before. That is to say, it didn't go on. Armenians, and other Christian peoples subject to the Turks, were massacred exactly as they had been massacred before. The organisers and the instruments of these massacres went unpunished just as they had gone unpunished before. There was this difference only: that, whereas under the old régime, when the Christians

were massacred, the Powers used to put pressure on the Sultan, under the new régime the Powers merely replied to the complaining sufferers, 'It is no longer our business; you must present your grievances through the proper and legal channel of Parliament, and your constituents will no doubt see that they are speedily redressed.' But the influence of the Young Turks was by no means simply negative. Superficially they plunged headlong into every kind of modern innovation, and this was especially true as far as the army was concerned. The old order was changed, but nothing was put in its place, and the only result of such changes was to sow in the hearts of the population —and especially in the hearts of the soldiers—the seed of disbelief in the wisdom and the sound qualities of those who brought the changes into effect.

The reasons why the experiment of the Young Turks in constitutional government failed, were, first, that the changes they effected were superficial and not fundamental, and secondly that the changes they made were premature and carried out in a rash haste against the advice of all mature opinion. Now, as I have already said, the Turkish experiment does not prove anything with regard to the main question of whether it is possible or not to introduce progress and new forms of government into Eastern and Moslim countries. Or, rather, all that it proves is this: (*a*) it is impossible to bring about any such changes in a hurry; (*b*) superficial changes will do more harm than good. But let us return now to the larger question, which is of vital importance to England at the present day in India, in Persia, in Egypt, in

fact wherever there are any Moslim British subjects. Is it possible gradually, and by degrees, to instill such lessons of progress into these peoples as will ultimately end in their governing themselves according to Western methods? Some people say it is. And the people who say it have had very large experience of the East; but they say it can only be done slowly and gradually, and that the change must be fundamental and not superficial. All intelligent observers of Eastern life and Eastern ideas, who have had a long and first-hand experience of Oriental countries, are agreed that if you introduce into Eastern countries the forms without the reality of Western government and Western methods, the result will be ferocious despotism and ultimate disintegration. This is exactly what has happened in Turkey under the

régime of the Committee of Union and Progress. To a man who is not an expert in such matters—to someone like myself whose knowledge of the East and of Oriental life is of the slenderest and of the most superficial kind—it is exceedingly difficult to understand how progress can ever become a reality in Moslim countries, unless the Mahomedan religion is changed out of all recognition, unless, in fact, it ceases to be Mahomedan: unless the word *Islam* ceases to mean resignation and becomes synonymous with hustle. Here, for instance, is what one of the wisest of all experts in Oriental matters, and one of the most brilliant of all writers on Eastern affairs, says on the subject. In his classic book, 'Turkey in Europe,' Sir Charles Eliot writes thus: 'The unprogressive character of Mohammedanism is due mainly to the Koran.

We have seen how the difference between the lives of Christ and Mohammed is reflected in the differences between their religions. Not less marked has been the effect of the sacred books of Islam and Christianity. One of the most remarkable features of the Gospel is its indefiniteness, in the best sense of the word—that is to say, there is so little in it applicable to only one place or one epoch.

'If one thinks of what are usually considered the crying faults of the times in which Christ lived—such as idolatry, slavery, and various forms of cruelty and lust—it is surprising to find that they are not denounced in the Gospel, or even forbidden. A perfectly general system of morality, applicable to all ages, is enunciated, which renders these and other sins impossible for those who practise it, but detail and local colour are conspicuous by

their absence. The Koran is the opposite of all this. Mohammed denounces the idolatry, infanticide, and other evil customs of the pagan Arabs, somewhat after the manner of the prophets of the Old Testament, and conferred an inestimable boon on Arabia by changing the existing condition of religion and society. Unfortunately, he also thought proper to legislate in detail for the form of society which he preferred—a state of things far superior to that which he abolished, but still not one to be forced on all nations in all times and countries. He legalised polygamy, slavery, and other things to which objection may be taken, and it is impossible to detach his theological teaching from his legislation. The weakness of Islam is that the liberal interpretation of the Koran presents almost insuperable difficulties. The New Testament lends

itself to many modes of treatment; both Roman Catholics and Broad churchmen read it with approval; it was not composed by the founder of the Christian religion; it puts forward no claims on its own behalf, but appeals mutely to the succeeding ages to interpret it as best suits their need. The Koran, on the contrary, after an introductory prayer, opens with the notable words, "There is no doubt in this book," and throughout constantly asserts that it is a revelation sent by the Almighty. Its precepts are put forward, not only as injunctions of the Prophet, but as Divine orders. Such coherence and thoroughness were, and still are, an enormous force for Mohammedanism as the church militant. They give it an unequalled power of converting, drilling, and disciplining savage nations. But the same characteristics become a source of

weakness in the religion of a great state in contact with European powers. Much of Mohammed's legislation is wholly incompatible, not only with what is commonly called civilisation, but with commerce and other business which a nation must carry on, if it does not desire to be left behind. Yet there are no means of modifying the law of the Prophet, or of setting it aside as non-essential. No Western critic or Eastern heretic has ever disputed the genuineness of a single chapter, or even verse, of the Koran. The book announces itself as the word of God, "a direction of the pious," and must be accepted as a whole and unreservedly or not at all. As the Prophet left his Church and State, so they are now, and so they must remain—austere, rigid, unalterable, with only a curse and a sword-thrust for

those whose institutions do not harmonise with their description.'

Now, if this is true, and I believe it to be incontrovertible—if there is indeed no means of modifying the law of the Prophet—if Mahomed's legislation is indeed wholly incompatible with what is commonly called civilisation—if the Church and State must ever remain as the Prophet left them, austere, rigid and unalterable—how, one asks oneself, can Islam ever progress, and how can the new wine of Western methods be poured into the old skins of Moslim tradition? And yet, there are men who have lived in the East, and know the Oriental mind thoroughly, who say that the thing is not impossible; that although Islam has been and is a static institution, it is none the less elastic, and that with regard to many of its social precepts, it is capable of an infinitely

liberal interpretation, and that, slowly and gradually, such a liberal interpretation could be introduced into it. I leave the question for experts to decide. Only the future can prove which view is right. Speaking as an outsider, I am profoundly sceptical myself of ever seeing the realisation of an elastic Islam, or rather of a reformed Islam. But the question which concerns the British race in dealing with its Eastern dominions is this: that whether the thing be possible or impossible this at least is certain—you cannot do it in a hurry and you cannot do it superficially without courting disaster. So much recent events in Turkey have proved.

Of course in saying that the Young Turks are responsible for the recent disasters to Turkish arms I do not mean to say that the Young Turks are the sole cause of the general decay of Turkey in

Europe. That would be nonsensical as well as grossly unfair. As everybody knows, the decay of the Ottoman Empire, which has been going on for years, and in fact for centuries, was caused by the fact that the Turks arrived as a conquering nation in Europe, treated Europe as an armed camp, and refused to assimilate or be assimilated by the people whom they conquered. Their military power declined, that of the subject races progressed. The Turks remained stationary in this as well as in all other matters, and in 1897 Sir Charles Eliot summed up the matter in the following prophetic words: 'The Turkish reformer and the Christian have nothing in common, and the mass of Turks mistrust the reformer. Even in such a matter as military reform, where there can be no doubt that improvements are in the interest of the Moslim, and the Moslim only,

the Turk will not take the view which his friends think he obviously ought to take. Foreign military instructors have again and again presented recommendations, and again and again they have been rejected, sometimes openly, sometimes with a pretence of acceptance, but always quite firmly. The Turk has a dim perception that even in military matters he cannot understand and practise European methods. If he tries to do so, the control will pass out of his hands into those of people who are cleverer than himself. But though he may think them clever, he does not on that account feel any respect for them. He regards them as conjurers who can perform a variety of tricks which may be, according to circumstances, useful, amusing, or dangerous ; but for all Christendom he has a brutal, unreasoning contempt—the contempt of a sword for everything

that can be cut, and to-day the stupid contempt of a blunt sword.' Here we have in a sentence the whole secret of the failure of the Turks to compete with the races they had formerly conquered. 'The stupid contempt of a blunt sword'—here also we have the explanation of the failure of the Young Turks reformers as far as military matters were concerned. Under the new régime foreign military instructors were introduced, foreign military methods were adopted, foreign theories of strategy were applied. But all this reform was superficial and negative. It had a negative effect. Old-fashioned officers were dismissed; the young officers talked French and German. The old-fashioned sergeants were abolished. The ancient and fundamental idea of Islam, to fight for the faith against the unbeliever, was deprecated. But the army retained

its brutal and unreasoning contempt for all Christendom, the sword remained blunt, and the new-fashioned manner of using it, which the foreign instructors attempted to inculcate, had merely the effect of bewildering the wielder of it. The result of the reforms on the army was, roughly speaking, to dig a gulf between the officers and the men, and to bewilder the executive by an ill-digested theory of strategy and practice. The result was disorganisation, confusion and chaos, and this result has now been written in history.

In blaming the Young Turkish régime I am in no way casting any reflection on the Turks themselves. The Young Turks were foreigners. They were puppets whose strings were pulled in Europe. Their temporary success was due to their throwing dust in the eyes of Europe and to the support of the Freemasons and of

certain financiers. They obtained this support because they appeared to be at one time the only thing in Turkey which there was to support. The story of their doings resembles Hans Andersen's tale of the Emperor's new clothes. The whole of Europe admired the new clothes whose manifold and brilliant qualities the cunning tailors pointed out, until a little boy cried out that the King was naked. During the whole period of the Young Turks régime Turkey was naked; the part of the little boy was played by the Bulgarians and the Allies.

All this does not prevent one from sympathising with the Old Turks—that is to say, with the Turks; for there are in reality no such things as Young Turks; there are only Turks and foreigners. Everybody who goes to Turkey is attracted by the character of the Turk, especially

by the poor Turk—his dignity, his self-respect, his hospitality, his perfect manners, his infinite and never-failing courtesy. And now, in the hour of his disaster, one cannot help feeling indignant with those, his former friends, who for so many years were so loud and ostentatious in their support of him, and who now, in the dark hour of his trial, have so suddenly veered round, and are equally loud and ostentatious in their denunciation, their scorn and their jeers. If the Turks were now to turn round and massacre every single European in Constantinople and in Turkey —much as I should feel for the Europeans— I should recognise that they had brought it upon themselves. There has never been a country which has suffered such ruthless exploitation at the hands of the foreigner as Turkey; and, since in all matters of practical business the foreigner is cleverer

than the Turk, the only means that the Turk has of redressing the balance is to turn round and to massacre the Christians. This is the initial and central difficulty of the situation of Turkey in Europe. The Turks have so far refused, or been unable, to assimilate Western methods. Westerners employ these methods against them and exploit them. The Turks' only answer is the sword. So has it always been, so will it always be. This leads one to believe that the happiest thing that could perhaps happen to the Turks would be for them to shake the dust of Europe off their feet and to seek the more congenial clime of Asia, from whence they came, to which they properly belong, and where they would have nothing to fear from Western competition. The blend of Turkish administration and Christian population is fatal and hopeless ; for Turkish adminis-

tration does not practically exist. Turkish rule is misrule. But of course the fact remains that they have had an Empire in Europe, that the Empire has decayed, and that this decay is a sad thing. I for one will not join in the pæan of triumph, much as I admire the patriotism of the Allies, deeply as I believe in the reality of their past grievances, and in the justice and the logic of their cause. However great the sins of the Turks may be, it is none the less a sad thing when we see that which has once been great and proud betrayed, humiliated and in the dust. *Mentem mortalia tangunt.*

'Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is pass'd away.'

II

The second part of this little book consists of letters written recently from the Balkans. The time I spent there was brief. I saw nothing of the fighting, and little of the war. But I did have the opportunity of getting some first-hand knowledge of the Bulgarians and the Servians, and I left both countries with feelings of admiration. When I reached Sofia the whole country seemed to be emptied of men. The city was deserted save by women, children and youths. All the able-bodied men had gone to the war. And what struck me throughout, during my stay in Bulgaria, and in the dealings I had with the Bulgarian people, was this: that the ideals of their nation and their people were concentrated in one burning quality, namely patriotism.

Patriotism was their religion, their art, their ambition, their recreation, their occupation, their inner life. Like the Spartans or the Japanese, they seemed to be imbued with one single purpose and to subordinate all their desires, ambitions, and feelings to one single aim. In Servia you are struck by older traditions, by a mass of historical associations, by the tinge and hue which an ancient and rich literature gives to a country. But here also you were met by a vital spirit of self-sacrifice and a strong motive power. But in Servia, voice and expression were given fully to the ideals of the people. In Bulgaria, the patriotism of the people was shrouded in a veil of impenetrable modesty and reserve. I came back from the war with the feeling that the cause of the Allies was not only the just, but the sensible one—that their victory was a

logical one, and in accordance with the larger interests of Europe and the only possible solution of the Eastern Question. Moreover I liked these peoples, and experienced kindness at their hands; but this does not prevent me from feeling the utmost sympathy with the fallen Turk in the hour of his trouble; and had I to spend the rest of my life in the Near East, I think I would choose the unreclaimed rather than the reclaimed Turkey; and yet I should be glad if Brusa and not Constantinople were the capital of Turkey: not that I envy any country the possession of the poisonous and cosmopolitan city of Byzantium, where the men of the East forget their virtues, and the men of the West add to the store of their vices.

MAURICE BARING.

February 1913.

LETTERS FROM THE NEAR EAST

1909 AND 1912

OPENING OF THE NEW RÉGIME

Constantinople: May 2, 1909.

SOMEBODY once said that the Turks had never conquered Constantinople, but that Constantinople had conquered the Turks. And certainly what strikes a man arriving here for the first time is the existence, the strength, and the baffling spell of that influence and that atmosphere which we call Byzantine, and the permanence of the spirit of Byzantium. It is this atmosphere and influence—so hazy and so

enigmatic—which make it difficult for a stranger to find out what facts are happening and to form any estimate of their significance. For the life in this city is deceptive as the Bosphorus, whose surface gives no hint of the many conflicting and perilous currents which it conceals. And as to sounding the native mind, besides being the work of a lifetime, it requires many rare qualities and an exceptional equipment. However, Special Correspondents must rush in where even fools fear to tread, and record such impressions as they receive, however misleading and wide of the mark they may be.

The first thing I have gathered is this, that the Young Turk movement is not of Byzantine origin. It is an outside growth, and has therefore qualities of energy and strength which are alien to Constantinople. Secondly, the most

important fact of all seems to be that whatever the faults and deficiencies of the Young Turks may be, they are now the only hope of salvation for the country; the only element which deserves the encouragement and support of Europe.

As to the origin of the recent mutiny, opinions are widely conflicting. Some people say that it is inconceivable that it should have happened without the instigation and deliberate consent of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid. Others, equally well informed, maintain that the Young Turks were determined to get rid of the Sultan, *coûte qui coûte*; that the Sultan may have made any quantity of mistakes in his life, but that he cannot have been so foolish as to have thought the mutiny would prove successful. Against this it is argued that the Sultan was ignorant of what was happening outside, and this argument is again met

by the counter-statement that the Sultan was admirably well informed. I leave the problem to historians; there is quite as much matter in it to provide a quarrel amongst historians as there is in the Casket Letters or the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask. Even a minor matter such as the behaviour of Abdul Hamid at the end of the crisis is pictured in absolutely conflicting colours by people who have heard the stories of eye-witnesses. The probability is that both versions in both cases are true.

But if the origin of the crisis is obscure, the result of it at least is plain. A military revolution has taken place, and it was carried out with energy, decision, and military competence. From a purely military point of view I am told by those who are able to judge that as far as the mobilisation and movement of the troops were concerned the Turkish army deserved great

praise. What they did was very creditable indeed for them and would have been creditable for any army, but that we must be on our guard against exaggeration, and not think that because this military task was well performed they could therefore beat the Bulgarians. If they attacked the Bulgarians they would be beaten. The problem which now arises is this : the revolution having been successfully accomplished, the logical result of it, and, indeed, the result to be most greatly desired from any point of view, would be the establishment of a strong and wise military dictatorship.

What Turkey wants is not legislation—her laws (those of the Code Napoleon) are excellent—but administration. On the other hand the Dictator will not dictate. General Mahmoud Shevket Pasha refuses to assume a military dictatorship. And

everybody is unanimous in praising this General, who combines with competence, patriotism, energy, and strength, an extreme modesty and hatred of self-advertisement. Therefore the question is: What is to be done? For the moment it has been admirably solved by the creation of a more or less anodyne Ministry. It is generally thought that this Ministry can only have a temporary character. And it may have resigned by the time this reaches you. But in any case the main problem—namely, that of insuring competent administration of a new kind—has not yet been solved to the satisfaction of those who are now playing the part in Turkish politics; nor is the situation viewed with considerable optimism.

'Nous avons gagné la victoire,' one of the most notable of the Turkish Deputies said to me yesterday, 'mais nous ne

savons pas comment en jouir.' And another member said to me, 'Things are better, but they are by no means all right: chez nous il y a tout à faire.'

Some people had hoped that a Ministry composed of young men would be formed, but the instinct of the country is to choose white beards to govern them, and, indeed, it certainly would appear rash to confide posts of high administrative importance to young men whose sole experience of administration consists in having written leading articles.

If I had to choose out the two signal facts from all that has occurred lately, I should say that they were firstly, patriotism and the energy of the Young Turkish military element; and, secondly, the want of men in the civil element. Yet, altogether, I should say the general tone was fairly hopeful, if not wildly optimistic.

In the meantime the surface life of Constantinople goes on as if there had been no storm at all. The only traces of the crisis that remain are the bullet marks and the damage made by shells in certain walls. I suppose the population of Constantinople is the most opportunist in the world. When the mutiny occurred it was apparently expected as a matter of course. I asked a Greek yesterday what the Greeks thought of the whole business. He said: 'We Greeks do not say anything at present, because we are afraid. We were quite content with the old régime, which guaranteed us our liberties, and we are afraid any change may be for the worse; but we are not going to say so.'

During the days immediately following on the crisis the streets were crowded with soldiers. All the tramcars and almost every cab were full of men who looked as

though they were dusty and stained with much campaigning, swart Albanians with their rifles slung across their shoulders, Macedonian gendarmes in their light blue uniforms. The mosques were littered with soldiers, who looked as though they had encamped in them. Altogether all this soldiery—which is now gradually diminishing—has behaved extremely well. Shots have been heard at night, but no outrages appear to have been committed, the only exception being the Marines, who were turbulent from the first, and it was said some days ago that they would have to be dealt with. As Tacitus says:

'Legioni classicae diffidebatur.'

They were dealt with this morning and have been disarmed.

The most picturesque event which has happened since I have been here, was the Selamlik last Friday. An extreme

casualness marked the proceedings. It was like things happen in Russia, only more so. Until the last minute nobody seemed sure as to whether the ceremony was going to be held at St. Sophia or not. Everybody was in doubt up to the very last as to what the Sultan's route would be. Most of the troops were drawn up in places by which it was impossible for the Sultan to pass. At the last minute the whole cortège was stopped by a large hay wagon, which leisurely took its way along the road which had been cleared for the Sultan. The whole of Stambul was crowded with the brightest of crowds —men and women of all colours, dressed in all colours, chirruping like sparrows, hanging out of wooden balconies beside broken Byzantine arches, where you catch sight of trailing wisteria and sometimes of the Judas tree in blossom.

The Sultan had no military escort and only one *sais* dressed in blue and gold as an outrider. There was no pomp and circumstance about the ceremony, and no fuss. It passed off very well and everybody seemed pleased.

A Turk told me with pride the following story, which has, I think, appeared in the Turkish newspapers. He said that the Sultan, on his accession, summoned his two principal Generals and offered them each a bag containing £50. They refused, and the Sultan said to them: 'Why do you not accept it? I am your father and you are my children.' But they answered that the ex-Sultan had made these kinds of presents and that it had done harm. They therefore thanked the Sultan very much, but refused to accept the gifts.

Yesterday I went to the Turkish

Parliament. It is not a big building. The Debating Hall is on the first floor, a long oblong room, full of desks, with a small white tribune for the members to speak from in the middle of one side of it, and above this a place for the President and his secretaries. There are small galleries, not much bigger than two boxes thrown together at a theatre, at each end, and a gallery for the shorthand reporters opposite the tribune. Alongside of this Debating Hall there is a long corridor forming the lobby.

The Parliament is a stone's throw from St. Sophia, and I suppose not far from the site where Justinian's Palace stood, and the crowd which stood smoking by the gates of the Parliament—the fickle, opportunist, supple-minded, picturesque crowd of Stambul—was, I suppose, not unlike that which took sides for the ' blues

and the 'greens' in the days of Justinian and Theodora. What is needed is a strong man and a wise ruler, not to keep that crowd in order, which is a task anyone can accomplish, but to rule and administer the Provinces and the peoples (with their conflicting traditions, their racial differences and their sharp religious differences), which that crowd represents and which formed the last shred of what was once the Ottoman Empire. Therefore the Young Turks should be encouraged and supported as much as possible. For it is only from their ranks that such a ruler can come. The alternative is Young Turk or nothing. But as the strength of the Young Turks lies in its military rather than in its civil elements, so one cannot help thinking it would be more satisfactory to see their whole energies devoted to the creation of Government and administration rather

than to the elaboration of a system of constitutional Government and parliamentary legislation. However, they will work out their salvation their own way. Let us give them a fair chance and wish them well, and hope now that they have conquered Constantinople they will not, in their turn, be conquered by that insidious city.

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK

Constantinople: May 6, 1909.

AN event of immense importance happened last evening. It rained. In the night it rained again, and the sky is still cloudy. The importance of this event, which is, perhaps, not at first sight apparent, lies in the fact that there has been no rain here for a long time; that the country has been threatened with drought; that drought means famine and famine means disorder and probably massacre and a general break up. In spite of this rain (it is of that kind which seems to bring little freshness, but rather an increased sense of weight), the energy of the European is but little stimulated at Constantinople.

The act of writing (always a painful operation) become more distasteful than ever in a city where all the manifold energies of the human machine seem to exhaust themselves in the acts of drinking coffee and having one's boots cleaned. You have your boots finished off out of doors after they have been preliminarily cleaned indoors. You sit on a chair and a man in a shirt and a fez rubs them, waxes them, greases them, kneads them with his bare hand, brushes them, dusts them, polishes them with a silk handkerchief, and paints the edges of them with a kind of spirit. And during all this process you look on at the shifting crowd, sip your coffee, and think long thoughts which lead nowhere.

Last Monday morning streams of people were walking briskly from Pera to Stambul, all in the same direction. They were

making for the Galata Bridge, for the news was in the air that they had been hanging some Turkish Danny Deevers in the morning. Nobody quite knew whether they had been hanged yet or not. Some people said they had been hanged at dawn; others that they were about to be hanged; others that they had just been hanged. They had, as a matter of fact, been hanged at dawn; three of them at the end of the bridge, three of them opposite St. Sophia, four, I think, opposite the House of Parliament, and three somewhere else; making thirteen in all. They were soldiers, and one of them was an officer. They were hanged for having taken part in the recent mutiny and for having murdered some men.

As you walked further along the bridge the crowd grew denser, and right at the end of the bridge it was a seething mass,

kept back by soldiers from the actual spot where the victims were hanging. You must think of the crowd not as a London crowd, all drab and grey, but a living kaleidoscope of brilliant colours; the colours of tulips and Turkish carpets and poppy-fields, red, blue and yellow. The gallows, which were in line along the side of the street beyond the bridge, were primitive tripods of wood, the victim being strung up by a rope fixed to a pulley. The men were hanged by being made to stand on a low chair. The chair was kicked away and the sharp jerk killed them. They were hanging not far above the ground. They were each covered by a white gown and to the breast of each one his sentence was affixed, written in Turkish letters. They did not look like felons or like murderers but rather like happy martyrs

(in a sacred picture), calm with an inscrutable content. I had but a glimpse of them and then I was carried away by the swaying crowd, which soldiers were prodding with the butts of their rifles. The dead soldiers were to hang there all day. I did not go any further.

As I was trying to make my way back through the crowd a Hodja (a Moslim priest) passed, and he was roughly handled by the soldiers and given a few sharp blows in the back with their rifles. I heard some fragments of conversation, English and French. Some people were saying that the exhibition would have a satisfactory effect on the populace. Also I saw a Kurd, a fierce-looking man, who was gnashing his teeth ; not at the victims to be sure, but at the thing, at the sight of three Moslims who had died, as they thought, for their faith, and for having

defended it against those whom they were told were its enemies, being made a spectacle after their death for the unbeliever and the alien. I wondered whether it would have a salutary effect on the population. I felt convinced that many of that crowd resented the sight and sympathised with the dead. That very evening I was told by a most intelligent Turk that certain elements of the population had bitterly resented the publicity of the executions. So far they have not been repeated, although it was announced that more would be held yesterday and the day before. A proceeding like this cuts both ways. It may have a salutary effect on certain people, but others will nourish on account of it that dangerous bitterness which sooner or later leads to an explosion.

On Tuesday afternoon I was wander-

ing about the streets of Stambul when, amongst the indolent crowd, I noticed several men who were peculiar. The first thing which was unusual about them was that they were walking in a hurry. The second thing which struck me was that they were dressed like Russians, in long grey shabby redingotes, what the Russians call *padevki*, and that their hair, allowed to grow long, was closely cropped at the ends just over the neck, where it hung in a bunch. They also wore high boots. I knew they were Russians and paid but little attention to them, since Constantinople is not a place, like London for instance, where the appearance of an obvious foreigner is a remarkable sight. But I met an English friend, who said: 'Have you seen the Russian pilgrims?' and this led me to run after them. I soon caught them up, for they were delayed under an

arch by some soldiers who were escorting some prisoners (soldiers also).

'Are you Russian?' I asked one of the pilgrims, a tall, fair man.

'Yes,' he answered, 'I am from Russia.'

'You are a pilgrim?'

'Yes, I come from Jerusalem.'

The man was walking in a great hurry, and by this time we had reached the Galata Bridge.

'Who were those men the soldiers were leading?' the pilgrim asked me.

'Those were prisoners—soldiers who mutinied.'

Here two others, a grey-bearded man and a little dark man, joined in: the grey-bearded man had a medicine bottle sticking out of his coat pocket. I am certain it contained alcohol.

'Some soldiers were hanged here,' I added.

'Where?' said the man.

'There,' I answered, showing him the exact spot. 'They stayed there all day.'

'For all the people to see,' said the pilgrim, much impressed. 'Why were they hanged?'

'They mutinied.'

'Ah, just like in our own country,' said the pilgrim.

'But,' joined in the dark man, 'have not you sent away your gosudar?' (Sovereign).

'I am not from here, I am an Englishman.'

'Ah! but did the people here send away their gosudar?'

'They did.'

'And was it done,' asked the grey-haired pilgrim, 'with God favouring and assisting (no Bozhemu) or not?'

I hesitated. The brown man thought I did not understand.

'Was it right or wrong?' he asked.

'They said,' I answered, 'that their Sultan had not kept his word; that he had given a "Duma" and was acting against it.'

'Ah!' said the brown-haired man, 'so now they have a "Duma"!'

'Yes,' I said, 'they have liberty now.'

'Ah! Liberty! Eh! Eh! Eh!' said the grey-haired man, and he chuckled to himself. Oh, the scepticism of that chuckle! As much as to say we know what *that* means.

'And you have a Sovereign?' asked the brown-haired man.

'Yes, we have a King.'

'But your Queen, who was so old, and ruled everybody, she is dead.'

'Yes, she is dead.'

Ah! she was wise, very wise.'

Now we have crossed the bridge. The pilgrims had hastened on to their steamer, which was alongside the quay. They were going back to Russia. But one of them lagged behind and almost bought a suit of clothes. I say almost, because it happened like this: A clothes seller—Greek or Armenian, or Heaven knows what—was carrying a large heap of clothes; striped trousers, black waistcoats, and blue serge coats. The brown pilgrim chose a suit. The seller asked five roubles. The pilgrim offered three. All the steps of the bargain were gone through at an incredible speed, since the pilgrim was in a great hurry. The seller asked him among other things if he would like my blue serge jacket. The pilgrim said certainly not; it was not good enough. Finally, after looking at all the clothes and

trying on one coat, which was two sizes too small, he made his choice and offered three roubles and a half. The bargain was just going to be closed when the pilgrim suddenly said the stuff was bad and went away as fast as he could, having said good-bye to me. He was a native of Voronezh.

At last a Cabinet has been formed, and it seems to have been satisfactorily formed. It contains some capable men, who are at the same time men of experience—the Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi, for instance, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The danger lies in a possible eventual clash of conflicting ambitions; of each important unit wishing to oust the other and to be supreme. For this Cabinet not only contains capable men, but men who are ambitious as well as capable. The most important fact in

the situation at present is financial. There is some money, partly that which is being paid by the Austrians and partly that which was found at Yildiz. Therefore it is thought that things will remain quiet for a month or two. The Macedonian troops, who are at present ruling the city, are admirable. The state of siege continues; everything is quiet for the moment, but all the people whom I have met here and who have had experience of Turkish affairs regard the present situation as being profoundly unstable; and some of them dread a great *debâcle* in about three months' time. All who are interested in Turkey should remember one essential fact which lies behind all the shifting combinations of political personalities and ephemeral intrigues, and that is this: in Turkey the Turk must be on the top. The equality of the Christian elements with the Turkish

is just as much out of the question now as it has ever been. As soon as the Christian in Turkey is put on absolutely equal terms with the Turk it means that the Christian gets the best of the Turk, and then the Turk will draw his sword, and nothing will prevent him from doing so. If anybody wishes to understand this he will find the whole question lucidly and completely exposed on page 153 of Sir Charles Eliot's monumental and brilliant book, 'Turkey in Europe.' The situation has not changed in its essentials since this book was written, and every word that Sir Charles Eliot writes applies to the present. A Turk was quoting to me this very passage a few days ago.

Again, as someone who has great knowledge of this country said to me yesterday: 'Qui sont les jeunes Turcs? Il n'y a que les Turcs.' It seems clear

that the Young Turks will realise this as well as anyone else; they know that if there is to be any order in this country the Turk must be top dog. Whether he be young or old is a question of detail.

THE SULTAN'S VISIT TO EYOUB

Constantinople: May 12, 1909.

AFTER a short spell of cold weather, the spring came back last Monday and opened 'her young adventurous arms' to greet the day of the 'Coronation' of the new Sultan. There was that peculiar mixture of warmth and freshness in the air, that intoxicating sweetness, which you only get in the South; and after the recent rain the mass of green foliage in which the red-tiled houses of the city are embedded, like red bricks in moss, gleamed with a brilliant freshness. The streets were early thronged with people eager to make their way towards Eyoub, where the mosque

is in which the Sultan is invested with the Sword of Osman.

I drove across the old bridge into the straggling Jewish quarter on the other side of the Golden Horn. The houses there are square and wooden, rickety and crooked, top-heavy, bending over the narrow street as though they were going to fall down, inexpressibly squalid, dirty, dusty and rotten ; they are very old, and sometimes you come across a stone house with half-obliterated remains of beautiful Byzantine window arches and designs. Every now and then you get glimpses of side streets as steep as Devonshire lanes and as narrow as London slums, with wisteria in flower trailing across the street from roof to roof. All along the road people were at their door-steps, and people and carriages were moving in the direction of Eyoub. After a time progress, which up

to then had been easy and rapid, came to a dead stop, and the coachman who was driving my companion and myself dived into a side lane and began driving in the opposite direction, back, as it seemed, towards Constantinople. Then he all at once took a turning to the right, and we began to climb a steep and stony track until we reached the outside walls of Constantinople. These walls, which were built, I believe, by the Emperor Theodosius, are enormously thick and broad. As we reached them people were climbing up on to the top of them.

Soon we came to a crowd which was being kept back by soldiers, and the intervention of an officer was necessary to let us drive through the Adrianople Gate into the very road along which the Sultan was to pass on his way back to Constantinople after the ceremony. We drove through

the gate right on to the way of the procession, which was stony, rough, and steep. We were at the top of a high hill. To the right of us were the huge broad walls, as thick as the towers of our English castles, grassy on the top, and dotted with a thick crowd of men dressed in colours as bright as the plumage of tropical birds. At this moment, as I write, the colour of one woman's dress flashes before me—a brilliant cærulean, bright as the back of a kingfisher, gleaming in the sun like a jewel. To the left was a vista of trees, delicate spring foliage, cypresses, mosques, green slopes and blue hills. Both sides of the road were lined with a many-coloured crowd—some sitting on chairs, some in tents, some on primitive wooden stands. Lines of soldiers kept the people back. The road itself was narrow. The crowd consisted mostly of poor people, but it was none the less

picturesque on that account. Vendors of lemonade and water carriers walked up and down in front of them. Some members of the crowd hung small carpets from their seats. The tents varied in size and quality, some of them holding magnificent embroideries, and others being like those which gipsies pitch near a race-course. We drove on and on through this double line of coloured people and troops down the narrow cobbled way until we reached the level, and there, after a time, we were obliged to leave the carriage and go on foot.

What struck one most about the appearance of this road, with its make-shift stands, its extemporary decorations, and its untidy crowd, was that in the East no elaboration and no complicated arrangements are necessary in order to make a pageant effective. Nature and the people provide

colours more gorgeous than any wealth of panoplies, banners, and gems could give, and the people seem to be part of Nature herself and to share her vivid brightness.

We walked through a cordon of cavalry until we reached the mosque of Eyoub. The Sultan had already arrived and his carriage was waiting at the gate. The carriages of other dignitaries were standing in a side street. Leading up to the mosque was a small street of wooden houses. Into the ground floor of one of these houses we were beckoned by a brown personage in a yellow turban. There was a small platform divided into two tiers, crowded with Turkish men and women; others were standing on the floor. Some of the people sitting down were officers; some wore uniform; among those on the lower tier were some soldiers, a policeman, and a postman. We

were welcomed with great courtesy and given seats. But whenever we asked questions, every question—no matter what it was about—was taken to mean that we were anxious to know when the Sultan was coming. And to every question the same answer was made gently by these kind and courteous people, as though they were dealing with children: 'Have patience, my lamb, the Sultan will soon be here.'

Immediately in front of us was the large French barouche of the Sultan, drawn by four bay horses, the carriage glittering with gilding and lined with satin. We waited about an hour: the people every now and then continuing to reassure us that the Sultan would soon be there. Then we heard the band. Two men spread a small carpet on the steps of the carriage, into which the Sultan immediately stepped and drove off, headed by a *sais*

dressed in blue and gold and mounted on a bay horse.

As this large gilded barouche passed, with the Sultan in uniform inside it, the spirit of the Second Empire seemed for one moment to hover in the air, and for one moment I half expected the band to play :

'Voici le sabre, le sabre, le sabre,
Voici le sabre, le sabre de mon père,'

which, as far as the words go, would have been appropriate, as the Sultan had just been girded with the sword of his predecessors. And this sudden ghost of the Second Empire was in curious contrast with the people looking on with whom I was standing. For they belonged to the Arabian Nights and to infinitely old and far-off things, like the Old Testament. They were quite solemn when the Sultan passed and murmured words of blessing.

But there was no outward show of enthusiasm and no cheering or even clapping. I believe there was farther on, but not to any great extent.

I wondered whether the ghost of the Second Empire, which had seemed to be present, was an omen or not, and whether the ceremony which marked the inauguration, not only of a new reign but also of a new régime—a totally different order of things, a fresh era and epoch—was destined really to be all this, or whether under its gaiety and careless lightness, it was in reality something terribly solemn and fatal of quite another kind, namely, the funeral procession of the Ottoman Empire.

The main impression one receives at Constantinople-to-day is one of instability. Everything remains to be done. The results of thirty years' inaction are there,

and the man who caused that inaction and sacrificed everything in a desperate struggle to maintain the political existence of his country and the supremacy of a Moslim minority in a country where Christians preponderated, is gone. Everyone is agreed that there is no great man to deal with the situation. Everyone who has been in Turkey for five minutes knows that constitutional forms and political theories mean nothing to the Turks in themselves; and that, unless they are combined with administrative capacity, they will be fruitless and useless.

If the new régime fails, the only result can be a great *debâcle*. That is why, without being pessimistic, the ceremony of the other day inspired one with doubtful thoughts, with clouded hopes and shadowy fears. There is, however, no doubt about one thing: there is—apart

from the men at the head of affairs—a large number of intelligent men who earnestly desire the regeneration of their country. There is also a patriotic army, which is well disciplined and well led. Let us hope, therefore, that the ceremony of the other day was indeed the marriage day of Turkey and a new order, and not the funeral of the Ottoman Empire. But I wonder which it was.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Constantinople: May 19, 1909.

THE atmosphere of Constantinople is like that of an opal which is perpetually changing, and the inhabitants of Constantinople are like chameleons, for ever assimilating the shifting hues of their surroundings. Events are the solid things which count here. And it will be impossible to form a true estimate of the present state of things until enough time has passed to enable it to bear fruits in fact.

One of the fruits of the dissemination of the idea of equality between the Moslim and the Christian has been the massacres of Adana, which are said, as far as brutal

details are concerned, to have surpassed any massacres which have yet occurred. The cause of these massacres is the same thing which produced any massacres that have ever happened in Turkey. The Moslim felt the Christian was getting the upper hand of him and therefore determined to diminish the number of Christians. There is this difference, however, between the old massacres and these. When the Armenian massacres took place it was known that the perpetrators of them would be *bien vus* by many persons in authority. Now those particular persons are no more. The massacres, therefore, whatever anyone may say to the contrary, were made for the 'wearing of the green' against those who did not wear it.

The Government of Turkey is at this moment in the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress, who are supported

by an excellent and well-disciplined army, and who have made a Cabinet—consisting of men who have served under the old régime. Every single Turk I have talked with about the present situation has said the same thing to me. You ask whether he is an optimist or a pessimist about the state of affairs, and he answers: 'I am not a pessimist, I am an optimist, only on one condition, and that is that a military dictator be appointed.'

Again, a Turk said to me yesterday: 'We must have a strong man for the people to obey; they have bowed their heads for so long that it is impossible for them to cease doing so.' But I confess I am puzzled when such things are said, for this reason: That as far as one can see there is practically at this moment a military dictatorship. The state of siege exists. Martial law exists. There is no

reason why it should not go on existing indefinitely. It causes nobody any inconvenience and assures the maintenance of order.

Since I have been here I have not met a human being of any nationality who believes that constitutional government, such as we understand it, can ever be a reality in Turkey. This does not mean that they disbelieve in any possible improvement; but what they do disbelieve is that the ideas of the French Revolution or of the London County Council will ever be living realities in the Ottoman Empire. Here is a little anecdote which will illustrate what is meant better than pages of theory. After the Revolution of July, when it was announced all over Turkey that the era of freedom had begun, a certain Vali (Governor) in Asia Minor summoned the

people of his district and told them that they had been granted freedom. 'What does this all mean?' asked a Moslim peasant who was present, indignantly. 'Were we slaves up till now?'

I remember a thing like this happening in Russia, and the difference between the stories enables one to estimate the vast difference between the political status of the two countries. When the Emperor granted his constitutional manifesto, a certain Governor, who was utterly bewildered by this novel Ukase, summoned the local elders and told them they had been granted freedom. 'But you must remember,' he added, 'that this means you are free to do good and to behave well, but you are not free to do evil.'

'Ah!' said a peasant, 'it was just like that before, your Excellency.'

The Russian was sceptical as to the

efficacy of any manifesto granting freedom. The Turk simply did not know what it was all about, because he considered himself already as free as the air, and rightly so.

Therefore in Turkey it may be said that the whole of this political panorama of shifting interests only affects the lower class, the poor, from the moment that they will consider themselves to be equal, and that is to say inferior, to the Christians. Then they will draw the sword. This has been said a hundred times. It cannot be said too often, for it is the keystone of the whole situation.

Let us take for granted that nobody here is really troubling about a Constitution. There remains administration. Turkey has excellent laws—why should they not be efficiently applied? The answer is, as a Turk said to me two

days ago, the Turk will not administer. He is like the Merovingian Kings, who preferred that the dirty business of government should be done by inferior people. During the last week long lists of curtailed salaries have been published in the newspapers. And it is thought that great masses of officials are to be sent away. If these dismissed officials are replaced by new ones the discontent would be so great—since the greater part of the population here consists of officials, that, unless troops remain in the town, there would probably be a replica of the recent mutiny amongst the civil elements of the population.

However, with regard to this whole question of administration, it is far too soon to form an opinion. And it would be unfair to take for granted that the pessimistic opinion must be the right

one. The new régime may organise some admirable administration; but so far the only good administration which has ever existed in Turkey has been the work of the foreigners.

Progress means, first, economical progress. Economical progress is difficult in Turkey, because Turkey is a pre-economical country. If the country were thrown open to foreigners and developed according to European methods, if the houses of the Turks were bought by foreigners, companies formed and a buzzing movement set going, what would happen? There is one thing which one can safely say would not happen. The Turks would not quietly and cheerfully co-operate with such a movement. And the Europeans who did such a thing would be obliged to carry out their ideas to their logical close and drive the Turks out of Turkey.

Here, again, the old question arises which has struck all men who have dwelt in the East and studied countries such as Turkey and Egypt. How can progress and Islam be blended? How can you urge a country to go on when the act of going on necessitates doing certain things which religion forbids? How can you change the social status of a country when that social status has been pronounced to be immovable by the law of the Prophet?

All that I have written so far seems to point to pessimistic conclusions. This is not necessarily so. It depends from what point of view you look at the question. If you judge the situation according to the probability or the improbability of realising in Turkey the methods of the London County Council or the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, then the outlook

is indeed as black as pitch; but if you hope that Turkish affairs may slowly develop on their own lines, that administration may be improved, that there may be less bad administration—then there is no necessity to be pessimistic. I can only repeat what I have said before. The Young Turks are full of energy. They have had one great lesson with regard to the danger of doing things too fast. They are quite alive to the necessity of the Turkish element having the upper hand. They have an excellent army at their disposal. Therefore all we can do is to wish them well. It is far too soon to say whether the task they have undertaken is possible or impossible.

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE NEW RÉGIME

Constantinople: June 21, 1909.

AT the present moment the Cretan situation is occupying the attention of European politicians. It is, therefore, perhaps worth while to consider somewhat closely the point of view of the Greeks and their position, their aims, hopes, and fears with regard to the later developments of the Eastern Question.

Before leaving Constantinople, I reported to the *Morning Post* by telegraph that there was a feeling of bitterness among the Greeks with regard to the present administration. In the *Morning Post* of Thursday, June 3, an interesting letter

from M. Alex Pallis appeared dealing with this fact and explaining it. M. Pallis tells us that, not to speak of bitterness among the Greeks at Constantinople, there is a strong reactionary feeling, but he tells us also it is practically confined to the Greek clergy, which is in favour of a 'reactionary restauration.' The feeling appears to be general, M. Pallis adds, because foreigners as a rule obtain their information from bishops or priests or from the Constantinople Press, which is devoted to Greek interests.

While I was at Constantinople I did not happen to meet a Greek bishop, a Greek priest, or a Greek journalist, but I did meet several intelligent and cultivated Greeks, who expressed to me sentiments of bitterness, and especially of distrust, with regard to the present administration, but who at the same time were far from

desiring anything like a reaction or a 'reactionary restauration.' The point of view of these people, of which I took careful notes at the time, is perhaps worth considering. One of my informants was a man whose name is well known in modern Greek literature, and, so far from being influenced by priests, he was an avowed agnostic, and so far from desiring a reaction, his profession and peculiar circumstances had given him an ample and bitter knowledge of the disastrous effects of the old régime.

I have no wish to contradict or to dispute M. Pallis' statements ; he must necessarily be a far better judge of the situation. I wish to supplement them by another point of view, which I came across and which seems to me to be worthy of notice, as it was that of able, experienced, and cultivated men. I will therefore make a

short abstract of the notes I took in Constantinople of several conversations with several Greeks.

The first thing which struck me was that these Greeks feared for their privileges. Now, these so-called privileges guarantee to the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire freedom of national education and the free exercise of their religion. The Greek communities of Turkey have been compared, and not unjustly, with small autonomous Republics under the jurisdiction of their bishops. These bishops are responsible for the political acts of the people in their dioceses. Should these people be found guilty of crime they appear before a tribunal consisting of Greek bishops. Every bishop is, in his diocese, the president of a tribunal whose business it is to deal with matters of civil and ecclesiastical law (such as succession, inheritance, divorce, etc.). The

régime of Abdul Hamid respected these privileges. The foundation of the Bulgarian Exarchate dealt them a blow, for since its establishment constant friction was caused by questions such as that of the Macedonian Archbishops and confiscation of churches, etc., but the main point of my informants was that, under the old régime, in spite of considerable friction, the privileges were on the whole respected.

The view of the new régime (I am, of course, expressing the whole time the opinions of my Greek informants) is that the Turkish Constitution cannot tolerate privileged bodies, especially that of the Œcumenical Patriarchate, which forms a state within the state. Nevertheless, in the course of recent debates in the Chamber, the President, Ahmed Riza, did not allow a debate to take place on the privileges, but declared

that they would be respected by the Constitution. This proves that the Young Turks do not dare to attack the privileges of the Orthodox Church directly, but they intend to accomplish their object by indirect measures, which are equivalent to the annihilation of the privileges of Hellenism. These measures are the Education Bill and the proposed law with regard to the military service of Christians. The Turks, say these Greeks, will attempt to do by means of the schools and their barracks what time and calamity have not yet been able to achieve—to make the Greek into an Ottoman. The Œcumenical Patriarchate is determined to struggle against this with all its might, and it will be sustained by the united efforts of the Greek nation.

A Greek professor corroborated to me the opinions which I have just written,

and cited the following as an instance. About three weeks ago the Director of a large Greek school at Constantinople received a visit from the Inspector of Public Instruction, who asked to be supplied with written information on the functions and progress of the school, the names of the pupils and professors, their age, class, nationality, etc. Other inspectors asked for like information in all the Greek schools. Everywhere they received the same answer: 'Greek schools can only furnish information to the Œcumenical Patriarchate.' The Government applied to the patriarchate, which refused to answer until precedents with regard to similar demands under the old régime had been examined.

The object of the Education Bill, say the Greeks, is to destroy Greek schools and to suppress Greek education and

the knowledge of the Greek language. Since instruction in Greek, according to this Bill, is to be given in primary and inferior schools only, and only if the pupils are exclusively Greek, all Greek secondary schools will be considered as private, and they will probably meet with the fate of the Greek schools in Bulgaria.

The proposed law with regard to military service, insisting that the Greeks shall serve with the Turks in the same regiments, will finish what the Education Bill has begun. The Patriarchate has determined to consent to the military law only on the condition that the Greeks should form separate regiments, and that these regiments should not leave the regions where they are recruited. At this moment a Committee is at work at the Patriarchate examining these two questions, which many Greeks regard as containing

between them the means of destruction of Hellenism in Turkey. On the other hand, no impartial person will have read what I have just written without reflecting what a difficult task it must be for the Turkish Constitution to deal with what the Greeks themselves say is 'a state within a state.'

Since the proclamation of martial law, since the passing of the Press Law, many Greeks say that they are living under a régime of sheer absolutism. They cannot defend their cause in the Press, as they were able to do before the recent events. They cannot tell their people the facts of the situation. Greeks of all classes detest the Constitution and the régime of liberty: not because it is a Constitution, but because it is not one; not because it is a régime of liberty, but because it is a régime of tyranny; not because they think the régime of Abdul Hamid was a good one,

but because they think the present régime is, for them, worse. Every day they are victims of the present state of things. In Macedonia the churches have not yet been given to the Greeks, and the Government favours the Bulgarians, and forbids Greek archbishops to travel in their dioceses and even goes so far as to arrest a Metropolitan. 'We admit,' say these Greeks, 'that in order that the Turkish Constitution be successful the Turks and Greeks must work hand in hand (as M. Pallis said in his letter), but we maintain that the Turks have done everything they could to alienate us and to widen the breach between us: witness the question of Crete.' And the reason, they say, the Turks have done this is that they do not know what a Constitution means, and that liberty in a European sense is a thing which they will never be able to

understand. And the proof of this is the manner in which they are dealing with those of their own Liberals with whom they happen to disagree.

Such are the opinions and such are the arguments I heard from the educated Greeks whom I met in Constantinople. Three facts seem to me to stand out clearly in all this: first, that the question impartially considered is one of enormous difficulty for the Turks; secondly, that, rightly or wrongly, the Greeks are exasperated, and their exasperation is increased, so I hear from Greek correspondents in Constantinople, with the increasing acuteness of the Cretan question; thirdly, a certain substantiation has been given to the accusation made by the Greeks against the Young Turks, of their want of Liberalism, by the more recent acts of the Young Turks. They have hanged a journalist

for his opinions, and they have condemned another journalist, Murad Bey, a man, so a Turkish general told me, of exceptionally great gifts and merit, and a sincere Liberal, to penal servitude for life. Such acts savour more of despotism than of liberty.

BULGARIA IN PRESENCE OF WAR

Sofia: October 31, 1912.

'On arrive novice à toutes les guerres,' wrote the French philosopher; or if he did not, he said something very like it. There is certainly no place in the world where being on the spot makes so sharp a difference in one's point of view as the Near East, and where one's ignorance, and the ignorance of the great mass of one's fellow-countrymen, is so keenly brought home to one. The change in the point of view happens with surprising abruptness the moment one crosses the Austrian frontier into what is, I suppose, for the great mass of Englishmen,

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a vague land peopled by chocolate soldiers. Other changes of a physical nature happen also when one crosses the frontier into any kingdom where war is taking place. The whole of the superficial luxuries of civilisation seem to disappear in a twinkling; and so adaptable a creature is man that you feel no surprise; you just accept everything as if things had always been so. The trains crawl; they stop at every station, and sometimes between stations; you no longer complain of the inadequacy of the luxuries of your sleeping-car; you are thankful to have a seat at all. It is no longer a question of criticising the quality of the dinner or the swiftness of the service. It is a question whether you will get a piece of bread during the next twenty-four hours, and a glass of water.

Belgrade Station was full of reservists

and peasants: men in uniform, men half in uniform, men in the clothes of the mountains, sheepskin coats, putties, and shoes made of twisted straw; dark, swarthy, sunburnt and wind-tanned, hard men, carrying rifles and a quantity of bundles and filling the cattle vans to overflowing. At every station we pass trains, most of them empty, which are coming back to fetch supplies of meat. Every platform and every station is crowded with men in uniforms of every description. A Servian officer got into the carriage in which I was travelling. He was dressed in khaki. He wore a white chrysanthemum in his cap, a bunch of Michaelmas daisies in his belt, and he carried, besides his rifle and a khaki bag which had been taken from the Turks, a small umbrella. He had been wounded in the foot at Kumanovo.

He was on his way to Uskub. He was a man of commerce and had closed his establishment to go to the war: the majority of the officers in his regiment were men of commerce also, he said. They had sacrificed everything to go to the war, and that was one reason why they were not going to have the fruits of the war, on the retaining of which they considered the very existence of their country to be at stake, to be snatched from them by a lot of diplomatists sitting round a green table. 'If they want to take from us what we have won by the sword,' he said, 'let them take it by the sword.'

I asked him about the fighting at Kumanovo. He said the Turks had fought like heroes, but that they were miserably led. Then he began to describe the horrors of the war in the Servian language. As I understood about one word in fifty

I lost the thread of the discourse, and so I lured him back into a more neutral language. He told me that someone had asked a Turkish prisoner how it came about that the Turks, who all the world knew to be such brave soldiers, were nevertheless always beaten. The Turk, after the habit of his race, answered by an apologue as follows: 'A certain man,' he said, 'once possessed a number of camels and an ass. He was a hard task-master to the camels, and he worked them to the uttermost; and after trading for many years in different lands, he became an exceedingly rich man. At last one day he himself fell sick; and feeling that his end was drawing nigh, he wished to relieve himself of the burden on his soul, so he had bade the camels draw near to him, and he addressed them thus: "I am dying, camels, dying, only

I have most uncivilly kept death waiting, until I have unburdened my soul to you. Camels, I have done you a grievous wrong. When you were hungry, I stinted you of food, and when you were thirsty, I denied you drink, and when you were weary, I urged you on and denied you rest; and ever and always I denied you the full share of your fair and just wage. And now I am dying and all this lies heavily on my soul, and I crave your forgiveness, so that I may die in peace. Can you forgive me, camels, for all the wrong I have done you?" And the camels withdrew to talk it over. After a while the Head Camel returned and spoke to the merchant thus: "That you ever overworked us, we forgive you; that you underfed us, we forgive you; that you never remembered to pay us our full wage, we forgive you; but that you

always let the ass go first, Allah may forgive you, but we never can!" '

It took over twelve hours to get from Belgrade to the Junction of Nish, where there was a prospect of food. When we stopped at one station in the twilight there was a great noise of cheering from another train, and a great crowd of soldiers and women throwing flowers. Then in the midst of the clamour and the murmur somebody played a tune on a pipe. A little Slav tune written in a scale which has a technical name I have forgotten—let us say the Phrygian mode—a plaintive, piping tune, as melancholy as the cry of a sea-bird. The very voice of exile. I recognised the tune at once. It is in the first ten pages of Balakirev's collection of Russian folk-songs under the name 'Rekrutskaya'—that is to say, recruits' song. Plaintive, melancholy, quaint and

piping, it has no heart-ache in it; it is the luxury of grief, the expression of idle tears, the conventional sorrow of the recruit who is leaving his home.

'You are going far away, far away from poor Jeannette,
And there 's no one left to love me now, and you will soon forget.'

So in the song of our grandfathers the maiden sang to the conscript, adding that were she King of France, 'or, still better, Pope of Rome,' she would abolish war, and consequently the parting of lovers. But the song of the Slav recruit in its piping notes seems to say: 'I am going far away, but I am not really sorry to go. They will be glad to get rid of me at home, and I, in the barracks, shall have meat to eat twice a day and jolly comrades, and I shall see the big town and find a new love as good as my

true love. They will mend my broken heart there; but in the meantime let me make the most of the situation. Let me collect money and get drunk, and let me sing my sad songs, songs of parting and exile, and let me enjoy the melancholy situation to the full.'

That is what the wistful piping song, played on a wooden flageolet of some kind, seems to say. It just pierced through the noise and then stopped; a touching interlude, like the shepherd's piping amidst the weariness, the fever and the fret, the delirious remembrance and the agonised expectation, of the last act of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde.* And the train moved on into the gathering darkness.

We arrived at Nish at 8 o'clock in the evening. It was dark, and the station was sparsely lighted, and the buffet to which we had been looking forward all

day was as crowded as a sardine-box and apparently devoid of anything suggesting food. Wounded soldiers, reservists, officers filled the waiting-room and the platform. The Servian officer dived into the crowd, and returned presently bringing his sheaves with him in the shape of three plates of hot chicken.

Nish did not look like the meeting place of a lot of triumphant soldiers, but rather like the scene of an underground conspiracy in a melodrama, where a lot of tired conspirators were plotting nothing at all. One felt cut off from all news. In London, one knew, in every sitting-room people were marking off the movements of the battles with paper flags on inaccurate maps. Here at Nish, in the middle of a crowd of men who either had fought or were going to fight, one knew less about the war than in

Fleet Street. One bought a newspaper, but it dealt with everything except war news.

A man came into the refreshment-room—the name was in this case ironical—and said, 'I have had nothing to eat, not a piece of bread and not a drop of water, for twenty-four hours,' and then, before anybody could suggest a remedy—for food there was—he went away. Afterwards I saw him with a chicken in his hand. One man was carrying about a small live pig, which squealed. In the corner of the platform two men, with crutches and bandages, dressed in the clothes of the country, were sitting down, looking as if they were tired of everything. I offered them a piece of cold sausage, which they were too tired to refuse; only at the sight of a cigarette one of them made a gesture, and, being given one,

smoked and smoked and smoked. I know the feeling. Suddenly, in the darkness, a sleeping-car appeared, to the intense surprise of everyone—an International sleeping-car, with sheets, and plenty of room in it. My travelling companion and myself started for Sofia, where we arrived the next morning.

At Sofia the scene on the platform was different. The place was full of bustle; the platform crowded with Red Cross men, nurses, and soldiers, in tidy, practical uniforms. The refreshment-room likewise was crowded with doctors. You heard fragments of many languages: the scene might have been Mukden, 1904, or indeed any railway station in any war anywhere. An exceedingly capable porter got me my luggage with despatch, and I drove to the hotel in a 'phæton,' but not with the coursers of the sun. The horses here have

all gone to the war. At the hotel I was first given—the only room said to be vacant—a room which was an annexe to the café, and the furniture of which consisted of six old card-tables and nothing else.

Full of Manchurian memories, I was about to think this luxurious, when the offending Adam in me quite suddenly revolted, and I was given instead a luxurious upper chamber. The air in Sofia is keen and bracing; the weather cold, with a touch of sleet. The town is clean, well laid out, well paved, with good tramways, and is going fast ahead in the building line. Put away all ideas of comic opera and all that pertains to Ruritania; Sofia is above all things businesslike, brisk and capable, tough and strong. The very first thing that strikes you here at the present day is not that you are in the picturesque show capital of an antiquated little

kingdom, but that you are in the busy, up-to-date centre of a Confederation which is a great Power, and a great Power of unguessed-of capabilities.

The next thing which strikes you is the manner in which the people value the war. To say that they are modest about it would be to understate the case altogether. Their attitude towards their victories is like that of a public school boy who, when in the company of his relations, meets a schoolfellow in the holidays. They seem discreetly to ignore their achievements and their prowess. The Servians talk enthusiastically; so do the Greeks, I am told; the Bulgarians say nothing. Evidently they have known and they know exactly what they want to do and exactly how they mean to do it, and to that great end everything else is subordinate. About half the shops in the town are shut,

for the shopkeepers have gone to war, and if there are any wine-vats here and had the vintage been going on, then this year

> 'the must shall foam
> Round the white feet of laughing girls
> Whose sires have marched to Rome.'

By Rome I mean New Rome. But their modesty, reserve, and sobriety are surely remarkable. Not one syllable of self-praise has been uttered, in their Press or elsewhere. They have entirely resisted the temptation to say 'I told you so,' or 'We were right after all,' or 'You didn't expect this.'

Considering that they had the experts of Europe against them, and considering that even those experts who had appreciated at its true value the excellence of their material and their organisation still thought that they had an almost hopeless task before them, the temptation must have

been strong. They blew all theory to bits, and never mentioned the fact afterwards. Surely they must have been tempted to say just once with Mephistopheles, *Grau, theurer Freund, is alle Theorie,* after they had once more proved the truth of the saying, but they didn't.

There is a toughness of fibre about this people which is remarkable and strikes one at first sight, an absence of slovenliness, and a directness, a unity, and a singleness of purpose. Yesterday afternoon I met by chance an Italian monk. Talking of the war, he said :

'It has not surprised me. I know these people well. I have lived among them for years, and I have never in my life seen such morally well-disciplined men. It is necessary that such men should defeat the Turks—*I Turchi, poveretti, sono Musulmani.*'

A few days ago here the Greek Minister was carried in triumph, which in view of past history is even more surprising than if Sir Edward Carson were to be carried in triumph by the Nationalists through the streets of Dublin ; and although I have no doubt that this will happen before long, if it happened to-day we should be surprised. It is more than this. It is as if the German Emperor were carried in triumph through Copenhagen. One is still more impressed here, in this orderly city, by the magnitude of the achievement of the new Great Power than in the blare and clamour of Fleet Street. There is very little about the war in the newspapers here. Their despatches are as laconic and unboastful as those of the Spartans. The Bulgarians have manifested a Spartan spirit not only in this, but also in their moral discipline, in the singleness of their purpose, and the concen-

tration of their patriotism ; and they have shown something else—the achievement of the paradoxical maxim : 'To find out what you cannot do, and then to go and do it.'

That is certainly the secret of all great military success ; and there can be no doubt that the Bulgarians, in face and in spite of the experts of Europe, have written a new page in the military history of the world.

WITH THE SERVIANS

Uskub, Servian Headquarters: Nov. 7, 1912.

I TRAVELLED from Sofia to Nish in the still existing comfortable sleeping-cars; but when I arrived once more at the junction of Nish I learnt a lesson which I thought I had mastered many years ago, and that is, take in a war as much luggage as you possibly can to your civilised base, but once you start for the front or anywhere near it, take nothing at all except a tea-basket and a small bottle of brandy. I had only a small trunk with me, but the stationmaster refused to let it proceed. War goes to the heads of stationmasters like wine. This particular stationmaster

had no right whatsoever to stop my small trunk on the grounds that it was full of contraband goods, and he could quite perfectly well have had it examined then and there; instead of which he said it would have to be taken to the Custom House Office in the town, which would involve a journey of two hours and the missing of my train. I therefore left my trunk at the station, nor cast one longing, lingering look behind. The only reason I mention this episode, which has no sort of interest in itself, is to illustrate something to which I will come later. At Nish I got into a slow train. The railway carriage was full of people. There was in it a Servian poet, who had temporarily exchanged the lyre for the lancet, and enrolled himself in the Medical Service. His name was Dr. Milan Curcin—pronounced Churchin. He showed me the

utmost kindness. Like all modern poets, he was intensely practical and an admirable man of business, and he promised to get me back my trunk and either to bring it to Uskub himself, as he was continually travelling backwards and forwards between Uskub and Nish, or to have it sent wherever I wished. He spoke several languages, and we discussed the war. He said the Servians were very sensitive at the abuse which had been levelled against them by Pierre Loti. Pierre Loti, he said, accused them of being barbarians and of falling upon the Turks for no kind of reason. 'We,' said the poet, 'hate war just as much as anyone else. What does Pierre Loti know of our history? And what does he know of Turkish rule in Servia? He knows Stambul; "but what does he know of Turkey who only Stambul knows?" Besides which, if Pierre Loti's knowledge

of Turkey was anything like his knowledge of Japan as reflected in that pretty book called "Madame Chrysanthème"—a book which made all serious scholars of things Japanese rabid with rage,—it is not worth much.' He had no wish to deny the Turks their qualities. That was not the point. The point was, the result of Turkish rule in Servia in the past, and that was unspeakable. The poet was obliged to get out at the first station we stopped at, and after his departure I moved into another compartment, in which there were a wounded soldier, a young Russian volunteer who was studying at the Military Academy at Moscow, two men of business who were also soldiers, and a gendarme who had been standing up all night, and who stood up all day. I offered these people some tea, having a tea-basket with me. They accepted it gratefully, and after a little

time one of them asked me if I were an Austrian. I said No, I was an Englishman. They said, 'We thought it extremely odd that an Austrian should offer us tea.' The wounded soldier, thinking I was a doctor, asked me if I could do anything to his wound. As he spoke Servian I could only understand a little of what he said. It seemed heartbreaking, just as one began to get on more or less in Bulgarian, to have to shift one's language to one which, although the same in essentials, is superficially utterly different in accent, intonation and in most of the common words of everyday life! Servian and Bulgarian are the same language at root, but Servian is more like Polish, Bulgarian more like Slavonic. Servian is a great literary language, with a mass of poetry and a beautiful store of folk songs and folk epics. Bulgarian compared with it

is more or less of a patois; it is like Russian with all the inflections left out. With the help of the Russian student I gathered that the soldier had been wounded at the battle of Kumanovo, and that his wound had been dressed and bandaged by a doctor, but that subsequently he had gone to a wise woman, who had put some balm on it, and the balm apparently had had a disastrous effect. I strongly recommended him to apply to a doctor on the first possible occasion. It is travelling under such circumstances, in war time especially, that one really gets beneath the crust of a country. Every man who travels in an International sleeping-car becomes more or less international; and it is not in hotels or embassies that you get face to face with a people, however excellent your recommendations. But travel third class in a full railway carriage

in times of war and you get to the heart of the country in which you are travelling. The qualities of the people are stripped naked—their good qualities and their bad qualities; and this is why I mentioned the episode of the trunk, in order to call attention to the extreme kindness shown to me by the Servian poet, Dr. Curcin, who rescued the trunk for me at great personal inconvenience. Let us hope that the 'Georgian' poets would do the same for a Servian war correspondent, supposing there were a war in England and they were to come across one.

After many hours we came to a stop where it was necessary to change, at Vranja; and then began one of those long war waits which are so exasperating. The station was full to overflowing with troops; there was no room to sit down in the waiting-room. We waited there for

two hours, and then at last the train was formed which was bound for Uskub. There were several members of the Servian Parliament who had reserved places in this train, and in a moment or two it appeared to be quite full, and there seemed to be no chance of getting a place in it. I was handicapped also by the fact of carrying a saddle and a bridle, which it was almost impossible to get into the narrow corridor of the railway carriage. But that I got a place in the train and that room was found for the saddle was entirely due to the kindness of an aviator called Alexander Maritch, who was one of those extremely unselfish people who seem to spend their life in doing nothing but extremely tiresome things for other people. He carried my saddle in his hands for half an hour and at last managed to find room for it where it would not be in the

way of all the other passengers. He was an astonishingly capable man with his hands and his fingers. There appeared to be nothing he could not do. He uncoupled the railway carriages; he mended during the journey a quantity of broken objects, and he spent the whole of the time in making himself useful in one way or another.

Towards nightfall we arrived at the station of Kumanovo, and got out to have a look at the battle-field. It was quite dark and the ground was covered with snow. Drawn up near the station were a lot of guns and ammunition carts which had been taken from the Turks. Here were some Maxim guns whose screens were perforated by balls, which shows that they could not have been made of very good material; and indeed at Uskub I was told that there were no doubt cases where

the Turkish material was bad; but what seems to have been a more important factor than this in the Turkish disorganisation is the fact that the Turks evidently, in many cases, did not know how to deal with their weapons. They forgot to unscrew their shells; they jammed their rifles. This is not surprising to anyone who has ever seen a Turk deal with an umbrella. He carries it straight in front of him, pointing towards him in the air, if it is shut, and sideways and beyond his head if it is open.

We arrived at Uskub about half-past eight. The snow was thawing. The aspect was desolate in the extreme. The aviator found me a room in the Hôtel de la Liberté; but the window in it was broken, and there was no fuel. It was as damp as a vault. We had dinner. I happened to mention that it would be very nice to

smoke a cigarette, but I had not got any more. At once the aviator darted out of the room and disappeared. 'He won't come back,' said one of his friends, 'till he has found you some cigarettes, you may be sure of that.' In an hour's time he returned with three cigarettes, having scoured the town for them, the shops of course being shut.

Uskub is a picturesque, straggling place, and at this time of the year, swamped as it is in melting snow, an incredibly dirty place, situated between a mountain and the river Vardar. Like all Turkish towns, it is ill-paved, or rather not paved at all, and full of mud. It is—or was—largely inhabited by Albanian Mahomedans. As the headquarters of the Servian Army, it is at present full of officers and soldiers; there is not much food, and still less wood. Here are the war correspondents. They

have not been allowed to go any farther; but the order has now gone out that they can, if they like, go on to Kuprulu, a little farther down the line, whence it is impossible to telegraph. A stay at Uskub as it is now would afford a tourist a taste of all the discomforts of war without any of the excitement. The principal distraction of the people here is having their boots cleaned; and as the streets are full of large lakes of water and high mounds of slush, the effect of the cleaning is not permanent. Matthew Arnold was once asked to walk home after dinner on a wet night in London. 'No,' he said, 'I can't get my feet wet. It would spoil my style.' Matthew Arnold's style would have been annihilated at Uskub.

The stories told by eye-witnesses of the events immediately preceding the occupation of Uskub by the Servians are tragi-

comic in a high degree. In the first place, the population of the place never for one moment thought that the Turks could possibly be beaten by the Servians. Suddenly, in the midst of their serene confidence, came the cry, 'The Giaours are upon us.' Every Turkish official and officer in the place lost his head, with the exception of the Vali (head of the district), who was the only man possessing an active mind. Otherwise the Turkish officers fled to the Consulates and took refuge there, trembling and quaking with terror.

The two problems which called for immediate solution were: (*a*) to prevent further fighting taking place in the town; (*b*) to prevent a general massacre of the Christians before the Servians entered the town. To prevent fighting in the town, the Turkish troops had to be persuaded to get out of it. This was done. The only

hope of solving both these problems lay in the Vali. All the Consuls, as I said, agreed that the Vali's conduct on this occasion shone amidst the encircling cowardice of the other officers and officials. Already before the news of the battle of Kumanovo had reached the town about 200 Christians had been arrested on suspicion and put in prison. They were not of the criminal class, but just ordinary people: priests, shopmen, and women. In the prison were already about 300 Mahomedans. News came to the Russian Consul-General, M. Kalnikoff, that these prisoners had had nothing to eat for two days. He went at once to the prison and demanded to be let in. He heard shots being fired inside. Some of the Albanians were firing into the air. He asked the Governor of the prison whether it was true that the prisoners had had no food for two

days, and the governor said it was perfectly true, and that the reason was that there was no bread to be had in the town.

'In that case,' said the Consul-General, 'you must let all these prisoners out.'

'But if I let them out,' said the Governor, the Mahomedans will kill the Christians.'

Finally it was settled that the prisoners should be let out a few at a time, the Christians first, and the Mahomedans afterwards, through a kind of hedge of soldiers; and this was accomplished successfully. M. Kalnikoff told me that among the prisoners were many people he knew.

Then came the question of giving up the town to the Servians without incurring a massacre. I am not certain of the chronology of the events, and all this was told me in one hurried and interrupted interview, but the Vali took the matter in hand, and as he was driving to the Russian

Consulate a man in the crowd shot him through the arm and killed the coachman. This man was said to be mad.

In the meantime the various Consulates were crowded with refugees, and in the French Consulate a Turkish officer fainted from apprehension, and another officer insisted on disguising himself as a *kavass*. The Servians, who were outside the city, at some considerable distance, thought that the Turks meant to offer further resistance in the town.

It was arranged that the various Consuls and the Vali (in their uniforms) should set out for the Servian headquarters and deliver up the town. This was done. They drove out until they met Servian troops. Then they were blindfolded and marched between a cordon of soldiers through the deep mud until they reached those in authority. They explained matters, and

the Servian cavalry rode into the town, just in time to prevent a massacre of the Christian population. As it was, the Albanians had already done a good deal of looting. That there was no fighting in the town, and consequently no massacre, was probably due to the prompt action of the Vali.

When the Turkish and Albanian soldiers retired south from Kumanovo they were apparently completely panic-stricken. At Uskub horses belonging to batteries were put in trains while the guns were left behind. There is not the slightest doubt that the troops massacred any Christians they came across. At the military hospital at Nish I saw a woman who was terribly cut and mutilated. She told the following story. Her house, in which were her husband, her brother, his son-in-law, and her two sons, was suddenly occupied by Arnaut

refugees. These are Albanians from the North, who are fighting with the Turks. The Arnauts demanded weapons, which they were given. They then set fire to the house, killed the woman's husband and everyone else who was there, and no doubt thought that they had killed her also. But she was found still breathing, and taken to the hospital. The doctor said that she might recover. Stories such as these, and far worse, one hears on all sides. The Arnauts are an absolutely uncompromising people. They give and expect no quarter. In the hospitals they bite the doctors who try to help them. They fight and strike as long as there is a breath left in their bodies. And there are still bands of them in the hills.

At the military hospital of Nish I saw a good many of the wounded. The wounds inflicted by bullets are extraordinarily clean,

and the doctors said that they were such that the wounded either recovered and were up and about in a week or else they died. There were cases of tetanus, and I saw many men who had received severe bayonet wounds and fractures at the battle of Perlepe, where some of the severest fighting seems to have taken place.

At the beginning of this battle somebody on the Servian side must have blundered. A regiment was advancing, expecting to meet reinforcements on both sides. In front of them, on a hill, they saw what they took to be their own men, and halted. Immediately a hot fire rained on them from all sides. The men they had seen were not their own men but Turks. The Servians had to get away as fast as ever they could go, otherwise they would have been surrounded; as it was they incurred very severe losses indeed.

You have only got to be a day in Servia to realise the spirit of the people. They are full of a concentrated fire of patriotism. The war to them is a question of life and death. And they regard their access to the sea as a question of life and death for their country. They have been the driving power in this war. They have had to make the greater sacrifices; and the part they have played has certainly not yet been fully realised or appreciated. The Servians are less reserved than the Bulgarians, but they have the same singleness of purpose and the same power of cleaving fast to one great idea. Not only has justice not been done to the Servians with regard to the part they have played in the whole campaign, but the actual fighting which they accomplished has been inadequately dealt with in the English Press. The French and Italian newspapers have had the best

accounts of it. There is no doubt that at the battle of Kumanovo and still more at the battle of Perlepe some of the severest fighting of the whole war took place. While I was at Uskub the campaign started in the Press complaining of Servian barbarities, massacres, etc. I did not come across any direct or reliable evidence of any such thing. The stories that Albanians were shot down in the streets of Uskub are mere inventions ; but it is quite possible that the Servians dealt very severely with the Albanians who, after the battles, attacked them in the rear. There were rumours also that they shot Albanian prisoners. How far this is true I do not know: but I do know from first-hand evidence that the Arnauts dealt with the utmost savagery with any part of the Servian population that they came across after the fighting. It is probably true

that irregular bands or isolated units of soldiery, *on both sides*, did each other the maximum of harm in the most disagreeable way possible; just as the Catholics and the Protestants did to each other in the days of the religious wars. If the Albanians complain of being massacred by the Servians, little sympathy can be given them, for massacre has been a constant factor in ordinary and everyday life. Likewise the Bulgarians and the Servians cannot complain of being massacred by the Turks. The extermination of a village by a band which was in a position to exterminate has from time immemorial been a recognised move in the code of Balkan warfare. I only spent four or five days at Uskub, and as there seemed to be no chance of getting within range of any fighting, I returned to Sofia.

I stopped on the way at Nish, and it

was then that I inspected the military hospital, that I met once more the Servian poet, and that I received my lost trunk from his hands. Just outside the Servian hospital there is a small church. This church was originally a monument erected by the Turks to celebrate the taking of Nish, and its architecture was designed to discourage the Servians from ever rising against them again, for the walls consist almost entirely of the skulls of massacred Servians.

CONSTANTINOPLE DURING THE WAR

Constantinople: November 21, 1912.

'ALL this proves,' said an intelligent foreigner to me at Uskub the other day, talking of the failure of the recent Turkish policy in Albania, 'that if you try to reform Islam you must reform it altogether. By reforming it altogether I do not mean abolishing it, but I mean slowly and gradually introducing a fundamental and progressive change in its social and political character. I mean by "reforming Islam altogether" not introducing superficial changes in its outward form of government, but introducing fundamental changes

in its social structure which will convert its government into one which is not Western in form but Western in fact. You may say that this is impossible. You may argue that to reform Islam is to abolish it. There is a great deal to be said for that view: but in answer I would urge that in certain Moslim countries the thing is being done, only, of course, it can only be done slowly; it cannot be done in a hurry. And in any case, whether it be possible or not to reform Islam altogether, one thing is certain: that if you superimpose on it the forms without the reality of a constitutional and Western Government, the result will be (*a*) a ferocious despotism; (*b*) internal dissension and ultimate collapse. This holds good for Persia, India, and any country where Islam plays a large part—not for China, which is totally different—and what is

happening in Turkey now is a tremendous object-lesson for England.'

So spoke, at Uskub, a man who had lived for many years in different parts of the Near East, and his words seemed to me to hit the nail on the head; but you need to come to Constantinople itself to realise to the full the nature and the magnitude of that object-lesson.

Many people have recorded the intense melancholy which they felt on arriving at Constantinople for the first time, especially in the autumn, under a grey sky, when the kaleidoscopic, opalescent city loses all its radiance, suffers eclipse, and seems to wallow in greyness, sadness, dirt, and squalor. A man arriving at Constantinople three days ago would have received this melancholy impression at its very intensest. The skies were grey and the air was damp, and the streets

looked more than usually squalid and dishevelled. But besides all this there was in the air a feeling of great gloom, which was intensified by the chattering crowds in Pera, laughing and making fun of the Turkish reverses, by the chirping women at the balconies, watching the stragglers and the wounded returning from the front, and listening, in case they might hear the enemy sullenly firing. Nevertheless, you felt that every Turk, sublimely resigned as ever, and superficially, at least, utterly expressionless and indifferent as usual, was walking about with a heavy heart, and probably every thinking Turk was feeling bitterly that the disasters which had come were due to the criminal folly of a band of alien and childishly incompetent political quacks. You felt also above everything else the invincible atmosphere of

Byzantium, which sooner or later conquers and disintegrates its conquerors, however robust and however virile. Byzantium having disintegrated two great Empires seemed to be ironically waiting for a new prey. One remembered Bismarck's saying that he could wish no greater misfortune to a country than the possession of Constantinople.

But so quick are the changes here, so chameleon-like is the place, that all this is already out of date. I have only been here three days, and during that short period the mood of the city has completely changed. Last night people were talking of the enemy being driven right back to Sofia; the feast of Bairam is being celebrated; the streets are decked with flags; the men-of-war are dressed; yesterday, in the soft autumnal sunshine, the city was glowing once

more 'like a dome of many-coloured glass.'

The stories of the cholera, people said, had been grossly exaggerated; 8,000 Bulgarians had been taken prisoners (800 was the subsequent figure, some people say three, some people say one). Cholera was raging in the enemy's lines. New troops were pouring in. The main enemy would be repulsed; the others would be dealt with piecemeal, 'as before'; in fact, everything was going well.

Possibly before I post this letter this morning there may be another sharp change in the moral atmosphere of the place. In any case, one must always remember that all news here is unreliable.

But before discussing anything else I will tell of a thing which I saw with my eyes, and which throws some light on the

conditions under which the war is being carried on here. On Tuesday morning I drove out in a motor-car with two companions and a Turkish officer with the intention of reaching the Tchataldja lines. Up to Tuesday people had been able to reach the lines in motor-cars. Probably too many people had done this; and very properly an order had been issued to put a stop to the flood of visitors. In spite of the presence of a Turkish officer with us we could not get beyond the village of Kutchuk Tchekmedche, which is right on the Sea of Marmora. Not far from the village, and separated from it by a small river, is a railway station, and as we drove past the bank of the railway line we noticed several dead men lying on the bank. The station was being disinfected. We stopped by the sandy beach to have luncheon, and before we had finished a cart passed us with more dead in it.

We drove back through San Stefano. We entered through a gate and drove down the suburb, where, bounded on one side by a railway embankment and on the other hand by a wall, there is a large empty space intersected by the road. Beyond this are the houses of San Stefano. It was in this space that we were met by the most gruesome and terrible sight I have ever seen; worse than any battle-field or the sight of wounded men. This plot of ground was littered with dead and dying men. The ground itself was strewn with rags, rubbish, and filth of every kind, and everywhere, under the wall, on the grass, by the edge of the road, and on the road, were men in every phase and stage of cholera.

There was nobody to help them; nobody to look after them; nothing to be done for them. Many of them were dead, and lay like terrible black waxworks in

contorted shapes. Others were moving and struggling, and others again were just gasping out the last flicker of life. One man was making a last effort to grasp a gourd. And in the middle of this there were other soldiers, sitting patiently waiting and eating bread under the walls of the houses. There was not a sound, not a murmur. Imagine a crowd of holiday-makers at Hampstead Heath suddenly stricken by plague, and you will have some idea of this terrible sight. Imagine one of Gustave Doré's illustrations to Dante's 'Inferno' made into a tableau vivant by some unscrupulous and decadent artist. Imagine the woodcuts in old Bibles of the Children of Israel stricken in the desert and uplifting their helpless hands to the Brazen Serpent. Deserted, helpless, and hopeless, this mass of men lay like a heap of half-crushed

worms, to suffer and to die amidst indescribable filth, and this only seven miles from the capital, where the nurses say that they cannot get patients! Farther on I believe it was still worse, and up till the day before yesterday people said the army was losing up to a thousand men a day from cholera.

But since the day before yesterday there has been a change. The dead from cholera, it is reported, have been buried at the front. The mortality has dropped from 1,000 to 120 a day. For this cholera is not of a very severe kind, and could easily yield to treatment. People are now saying that the whole question has been exaggerated; but I do not think it was at first, and certainly the sample of what one saw at San Stefano leads one to think that exaggeration was difficult. As I write the hopeful optimistic

feeling in the air is still lasting. It is reported that the preliminaries towards an armistice have been arranged. I also hear on good authority that Nazim Pasha does not want to make peace, as he thinks that the situation of the Turkish Army has really taken a seriously favourable turn. Order has been restored. The troops are being fed. The dead are being buried ; 800 prisoners (or in any case some prisoners)[1] are said to have been taken, and some guns. (This is quite unconfirmed up to now.) That is the situation as I write. Of course it may all change again rapidly, and in Constantinople, the city of a thousand rumours, it is difficult to snatch a grain of truth. But there is no doubt that at this moment, the morning of November 21, the feeling in the city is hopeful, although the hopes may be false.

[1] Nobody ever saw those prisoners.

What one realises here to the full is the cause of the Turkish reverses and misfortunes: the cause of the lamentable lack of organisation, order, and arrangement; and the cause is—you will find no two opinions on the subject here—the devastating policy of the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress. Sincere, no doubt, in their aims, obstinate and opinionated in their views, completely lacking in political experience, without a statesman or a leader of any real capacity or competence, deaf to the advice of more experienced men, deaf, in fact, to any advice, they set about at a breakneck speed to do what all those who know the East have always been convinced is an impossible thing to do, to *modernise* Islam. That is to say, to make Islam modernist (in the theological sense), which does not mean to stretch the institutions of Islam

and to allow them to include and to slowly assimilate Western ideas (and it is disputable whether even this can ever be done), but to apply certain superficial modern forms and formulas to it immediately and at once, and to force these forms and formulas down the throats of a recalcitrant people, who could not possibly understand them. 'Give the Young Turks a chance,' said even the sceptical in 1909, 'and let us pray that they may not try to do everything in too great a hurry.' The prayer was a vain one. The Young Turks went ahead, neither looking nor listening to the right nor to the left; and above all things they tried to do everything immediately, at once, and with the greatest possible despatch. They tried to revolutionise the fundamentals of Islam in the space of three years. They hypnotised Europe;

they secured the support of the Freemasons and all the parties affiliated to them in the countries of Europe; they secured the support of a certain section of the financial world, and what was the result?

They rent the Ottoman Empire in two by their treatment of Albania, and they disintegrated and disorganised the army; they in no way relieved, but, on the contrary, accentuated the trouble arising from the friction between Turkish rulers and Christian subjects. They refused to punish Turkish officials who were guilty of oppressing the Christians. And when they did punish, they chose the innocent and the insignificant. Their rule was as arbitrary as that of Abdul Hamid, only they had not one jot of his statesmanship or of his prestige. In Albania they tried to crush the Albanian nationality, to

make the peoples there speak one language and to bend all one way. They failed. And the result is that Turkey has lost Albania.

But their most mischievous work was in the army. And it all sounds so plausible theoretically. 'We will make the army modern and up to date,' they said. 'We must get rid of fanaticism; we must teach the soldiers that they must no longer fight, as their unenlightened and rude forefathers fought, for the Faith, the *Din*, but for their country. They must no longer think that if they fall in battle they will go straight to Paradise; but they must learn that they will be mentioned together with the names of Hannibal, Cæsar, and Napoleon, and the heroes of the West.' But the Turk is a nomad. The idea of country, *Patrie*, *Vaterland*, means nothing to him. The idea of the greatness

of the Osmanli, or the defence of the Faith, means everything to him. The soil of a given place is no more to him than soil. And if you take away from him the idea of the defence of the Faith, you take away half his fighting power.

Well, this theory was carried out. Older officers of experience were dismissed in large numbers because they were suspected of being conservative. The old kind of non-commissioned officer, who was the backbone of the army and the bridge between the officers and the men, was abolished, and the private soldier was left face to face with young and scientifically trained officers whose language and complicated instruction he could not understand. Religious observances were diminished and discouraged. The bugle calls, which used to be sounded at the hours of prayer so that the soldiers might know in their barracks that it was

the hour of prayer, were done away with. The officers were encouraged to be modern in their habits. Terrible jealousies, dissensions and conflicts were rampant in the whole army, so that when the war began the army was under-officered and badly officered, disorganised, and bewildered. It had got nothing to look up to, and in many cases nobody to lead it.

This was the direct result of the policy of the Committee of Union and Progress. There were many people here who foresaw this result in 1909. They were not only ignored, but it was almost impossible for them to state their views in Europe at all. People talked of progress and of combining the ancient virtues of the Moslim with the enlightenment of our scientific age. But anyone who has been five minutes in a Moslim country knows that if Islam is to retain any particle of what makes it

Islam it cannot progress in a hurry. Islam is by nature a static institution. Some people say it is elastic and that its moral code admits of infinite extension and assimilation. This may be true. I am not a competent judge of the matter; I am sceptical with regard to the question, since it seems to me that reformed Islam ceases to be Islam: the very word Islam means resignation; but the one thing I am a competent judge of, and anyone who has ever been in the East is a competent judge of, and that is that you cannot change or reform Islam in a twinkling, '*Du jour au lendemain.*' Islam is the negation of swift and sudden progress; and if you want to reform it you must reform it altogether and slowly. This in some cases may be possible. What is impossible and what is disastrous, as facts have now proved, is to tamper with and to tinker Islam, and

to pour new theories into the old bottles. To think you can make a Moslim into a sceptical Moslim, into a 'modernist' Moslim, who will retain his faith, but as a thing that does not really matter, and as a pure matter of form; to expect to instil such a frame of mind into the Turkish soldier, was folly; and the result of the attempt to do so is now only too clear. And, as the observer whom I quoted at the beginning of this letter said, the object-lesson is especially interesting for us in view of the situation which faces us in India and in Persia, and the existence in England of those sincere and well-meaning but naïve committees who sit in the House of Commons, and whose object is to help the Persian and other peoples in their 'struggle for freedom,' all unconscious of the fact that the realisation of their well-meaning and well-reasoned theories would lead, and

can but lead, to the disintegration and the collapse of the countries whose welfare they desire. 'C'est prodigieux tout ce que les Anglais ignorent,' said an Austrian statesman, or words to that effect.

THE CHOLERA AT SAN STEFANO

Constantinople: December 10, 1912.

SAN STEFANO is a small suburb of Constantinople whose name, as we all know, has been written in history. Possibly some day Clapham Junction will be equally famous, if there is ever a Treaty of Clapham, subsequently ratified by the Powers at a Congress of Constantinople or Delhi. It contains a number of elegant whitewashed and two-storied houses, inhabited by the well-to-do of Constantinople during the summer months. San Stefano—why or how I know not—became during the war one of the smaller centres of the sick—in other words, a cholera camp.

San Stefano, at the time of my writing, is entirely deserted. The elegant summer 'residences' are empty. The streets are silent. You can reach San Stefano from Constantinople either by steamer, which takes a little over an hour and a half; or by train, which takes an hour (but there are practically no trains running); or in a carriage, which takes two hours and a half. The whole place at present is lifeless. Only on the quay you see porters and Red Crescent orderlies dealing with great bales of baggage, and every now and then in the silent street you hear the tinkling stale music of a faded pianoforte which plays an old-fashioned—not an old—tune. I wondered when I heard this music who in the world could be playing the pianoforte in San Stefano at such a moment. I need hardly say that the effect was not only melancholy but uncanny; for what is

there sadder in the world than out-of-date music played on an exhausted and wheezy instrument?

When you arrive at the quay you see a line of houses fronting the sea. You then turn up a muddy side street and you come to a small square, where there are a few shops and a few cafés. In the cafés, which are run by Greeks, there are still people drinking coffee. The shops are trading in articles which they have brought from the bazaars and which they think may be of use to the cholera patients. A little farther on beyond the muddy square, where a quantity of horses, donkeys, and mules are tethered to the leafless trees, you come to a slight eminence surrounded by walls and railings. Within these walls there is a small building made of stucco, Grecian in style. It is the deserted Greek school. This is the place where cholera patients

at last found shelter, and this is the place to which I was brought by the kindness of Major Ford, U.S.A., and Mr. Philip, First Secretary of the American Embassy, who were both of them devoting themselves to the relief of the cholera victims.

It was at San Stefano about a fortnight ago that under the outside wall of the town and on the railway embankment the dead and dying were lying like crushed insects, without shelter, without food, without water. Since then Miss Alt, a Swiss lady of over seventy, and a friend of hers, an Austrian lady, Madam Schneider, seeing that nothing was being done for these people, and that no medical or other assistance was being brought them, took the matter into their own hands and started a relief fund with a sum of £4, and gave themselves up to the task of doing what they could for the sick. They turned

the deserted Greek school into a hospital, and they were joined by Mr. Frew, a Scotch minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Constantinople. Funds were then supplied them by the British and American Embassies, and Major Ford, an American surgeon, who was at Constantinople by way of having a rest cure, and Mr. Philip, joined these two heroic ladies and Mr. Frew. And it was owing to the kindness of Major Ford that I was allowed to visit the spot.

The first day I arrived there was no other medical aid, with the exception of a Turkish sergeant; but the day after, a Turkish medical officer arrived and the whole matter was nominally under his charge. The medical work of the place was undertaken by Major Ford, and the commissariat was managed by Mr. Frew. There are in the Greek school nine rooms

altogether. Of these six are occupied by patients, one forms a kind of kitchen and store-room, and two of the rooms are occupied by the medical staff of the Turkish Red Crescent. Besides this there is a compound roofed over in the open air, and there are a certain number of tents—a dozen or so. In this house and in these tents there were at first thrown together over 350 men, all in various stages of sickness. Some of them were in the last stage of cholera; some of them had dysentery; some of them had typhus; some were suffering from exhaustion and starvation, and the greater part of them were very sick.

At first there was some doubt whether the disease was cholera. The disease which was manifest—and terribly manifest—did not include all the best-known symptoms of cholera. It was plain also that a great

number of the soldiers were suffering simply from exhaustion, exposure, and starvation. But later on medical diagnosis was made, and the cholera microbe was discovered. A German cholera specialist who came from Berlin, Dr. Geissler, told me that there was no doubt of the existence of the cholera microbe. Besides which, some of the symptoms were startlingly different from those of mere dysentery. From the human point of view, and not from the scientific point of view, the question was indifferent. The solemn fact from the human point of view was that the Turkish soldiers at San Stefano were sick and dying from a disease that in any case in many points resembled cholera, and that others were dying from what was indistinguishable from cholera in its outward manifestations. Every day and every night so many soldiers died, but

less and less as the days went on. One night thirty died; another night fifteen; another night ten; another night thirteen again, and so on.

I have called the Greek school a hospital, but when you think of a hospital you call up the vision of all the luxury of modern science—of clean beds, of white sheets, of deft and skilful nurses, of supplies of sterilised water, antiseptics, lemonade, baths, quiet, space, and fresh and clean air. Here there were no such appliances, and no such things. There were no beds; there were mattresses on the dusty and dirty floors. The rooms were crowded to overflowing. There was no means of washing or dressing the patients. It is difficult to convey to those who never saw it the impression made by the first sight of the rooms in the Greek school where the sick were lying. Some of the details are too

horrible to write. It is enough to say that during the first few days after the sick were put into the Greek school the rooms were packed and crowded with human beings, some of them in agony and all of them in extreme distress. They lay on the floor in rows along the walls, with flies buzzing round them: and between these rows of men there was a third row along the middle of the room. They lay across the doors, so that anybody opening a door in a hurry and walking carelessly into the room trod on a sick man. They were weak from starvation. They were one and all of them parched, groaning and moaning, with a torturing and unquenchable thirst. They were suffering from a multitude of other diseases besides cholera. One man had got mumps. Many of the soldiers had gangrened feet and legs, all blue, stiff and rotten, as if they had

been frostbitten. These soldiers had either to have their limbs amputated or to die—and there is no future for an amputated Turk. There is nothing for him to do save to beg. Some of them had swellings and sores and holes in their limbs and in their faces, and although most of them were wounded, all of them were unwashed and many of them covered with vermin. Most of them besides their overcoats and their putties had practically no clothes at all. Their underclothes were in rags, and caked with dirt. The sick were all soldiers; most of them were Turks; some of them were Greeks.

In such a place any complicated nursing was out of the question. The main duties of those who attempted to relieve the sick consisted in bringing warm clothes and covering to those who were in rags and shivering, soup to those

who were faint and exhausted, and water to those who were crying for it; and during the first few days at San Stefano all the sick were crying for water, and crying for it all day and all night long. You could not go into any of the rooms without hearing a piteous chorus of 'Doctor Effendi, Doctor Bey, sou, sou, sou' (*sou* is the Turkish for water). Luckily the water supply was good. There was a clean spring not far from the school, and water mixed with disinfectant could be given to the sick. The sick and the well at first were crowded together absolutely indiscriminately. A man who had nothing the matter with him besides hunger and faintness would be next to a man who was already rigid and turning grey in the last comatose stage of cholera.

During the first week of this desperate state of things Miss Alt and Madam

Schneider worked like slaves and accomplished the impossible. They spent the whole day and very often the whole night in bringing clothes to the ragged, food to the hungry, and water to the thirsty. Mr. Frew managed the whole commissariat and the food supply, and he managed it with positive genius. He smoothed over difficulties, he razed obstacles, and in all the creaking joints of the difficult machinery he poured the inestimable oil of his cheerfulness, his good-humour and his kindness. Major Ford acted with an equal energy in taking over the medical side of the school and in sorting from the heaped-up sick those who were less ill and separating them from those who were dangerously ill; and in this task he was ably seconded by Mr. Philip. This sounds a simple thing to say. It was in practice and in fact incredibly difficult. During the first

days there were scarcely any orderlies at all and very few soldiers, and it was a desperately slow and difficult task to get people carried from one place to another. One afternoon, which I shall never forget as long as I live, Major Ford undertook in one of the crowded rooms to shift temporarily all the sick from one side of the room to the other side of it, and while they were there to lay down a clean piece of oil-cloth. The difficulty of this was immense. The patients of course were unwilling to move. First of all it had to be explained to them that the thing was not a game, and that it would be to their ultimate advantage; and then they had to be bribed from one side of the room to the other with baits of lemons and cigarettes. Nevertheless Major Ford managed to do this and to get down a clean piece of oil-cloth. When one spent the whole day in this place, and one had seen

people like Miss Alt, Madam Schneider, Major Ford, and Mr. Frew working like slaves from morning till night, one still had the feeling nothing had been done at all compared with what remained undone, so overwhelming did the odds seem. And yet at the end of one week there was a vast change for the better in the whole situation.

With regard to the sick, great as was the distress of these wretched victims, they were sublime in their resignation. They consented, like Job, in what was worse than dust and ashes, to the working of the Divine will. They most of them had military water bottles; they used to implore to have these bottles filled; and when they were filled—thirsty as they were—they would not drink all the water, but they kept a little back in order to perform the ablutions which the Mahomedan religion ordains should accompany

the prayers of the faithful. Even in their agony the Turks never lost one particle of their dignity, and never for one moment forgot their perfect manners. They died as they lived—like the Nature's noblemen they are—always acknowledging every assistance; and when they refused a gift or an offer they put into the refusal the graciousness of an acceptance.

Only those who have been to Turkey can have any idea of the politeness, the innate *politesse du cœur* of the Turk. One day when I was coming back from San Stefano on board a Turkish Government launch and together with an English officer I was talking to the Turkish naval officer who was in command of the launch, the Englishman offered a cigarette to the Turkish officer. He accepted it and lit it. The Englishman then offered one to the

officer's younger brother, who was there also. 'He does not smoke,' said the officer. Then he added, after a pause, 'I do not either.' 'He has lit and smoked the cigarette so as not to offend me,' said the Englishman aside to me. This is typical of the kind of politeness the Turks show. Equally polite were the soldiers who were dying of a horrible disease amidst awful conditions. They never forgot their manners or their dignity. They were childlike and infinitely pathetic in their wants. One man in a tent where some of the convalescent were assembled, cried out in Turkish his need—which was interpreted to me by a Greek. He wanted a candle, by which a man, he said, might tell stories to the others; for, he added, it was impossible for a story-teller to tell stories in the dark; the audience could not see his face. There was

no candle in the place, but I am not ashamed to say that I stole a small lamp and gave it to this man to afford illumination to that story-telling. Another man wanted a lemon. There were then no lemons. The man produced a five-piastre piece (a franc, nearly a shilling). This was a large fortune to him, but he offered it to me if I could get him a lemon. One soldier refused either to eat or to drink. He would not touch either soup or milk or water or sour milk, which was the favourite dish of the soldiers there and which, being a national dish of Turkey, could be supplied to them in great quantities. He kept on reiterating one word. It turned out to mean prune soup. He was hankering after prune soup. He wanted prune soup and nothing else. Another man wanted a pencil, above all things, which was duly given him.

The gratitude of these poor people to anyone who did any little thing for them was immense. 'Allah will restore to you everything you have done for us a hundred-fold,' they would say. Or again, 'You are more than a doctor to us, you are a friend.' One day Mr. Philip brought some flowers to the sick soldiers. Their gratitude and their delight knew no bounds. The Turks love flowers. They treasured them. They even sacrificed their water bottles—and every drop of water was precious to them—to keep the flowers fresh a little longer.

The curious resignation of the Turkish character used often to be manifest in a striking way, in little matters. Here is an instance which struck me. When one used to distribute lemons or cigarettes, or indeed anything else, to the patients, one used to go round the room

giving one cigarette or one lemon as the case might be to each man. Sometimes a patient would ask for two, and his demand used to arouse the indignation of his fellow-patients, which was often expressed in violent terms. Nevertheless he would persist in his demand, and would keep on saying 'Give me two, Doctor, give me two'; and finally one of the Turkish orderlies present would nod his head, and say 'Yes, give him two'; and then he would be given two, and the other patients, instead of grumbling, would acquiesce before the *fait accompli*, and say 'Yes, yes, give him two.' The curious thing was they never dreamt of all of them asking for two of any one thing; but the very importunate were acknowledged to be privileged if they were sufficiently importunate.

After the first few days, the Turkish

medical authorities took steps in the matter of the Greek school. And during the first week of the work there a British unit of the Turkish Red Crescent arrived from England under the able direction of Dr. Baines, and a further recruit joined the helpers in the person of Lady Westmacott. Although it was impossible to persuade any of the owners of the houses at San Stefano to allow them to be used as hospitals, a house was found for Dr. Baines' unit, and he soon set up a lot of tents, withdrew from the overcrowded school a number of the patients, and was able to do excellent work. But he received this house for himself and his staff on the express condition that no sick of any kind whatsoever, and not even the owner's father, should be allowed to go into it. Later on a unit of the Egyptian Red Crescent arrived, consisting

of some German doctors and an Englishman. Wooden barracks were built for them in the plain outside the Greek school fronting the sea.

Hard words have been said about the Turkish medical authorities with regard to this matter, and it is of course easy for people who know nothing about the local conditions and the local difficulties to pass sweeping judgments in such matters. On the whole, I have been told by competent authorities, the Turkish Red Crescent did exceedingly well in dealing with the wounded and the sick in the large field of their operations. But an epidemic of cholera such as that which I have described seemed to paralyse them. It took the Turks unprepared. Steps were taken but tardily, and to Western minds the procedure seemed incredibly and criminally slow; but the fact remains that in the

East it is impossible to do things in a hurry, and if you try to hustle you will find that there will be less speed in the long run. Taking all things into consideration, the Turkish medical authorities, and especially the Turkish doctor in charge at San Stefano, did their best when once they started to work. But it is useless to slur over the fact that when this appalling situation arose, when the cholera victims were lying like flies on the railway embankment at San Stefano, they took no steps to cope with the situation until they were stimulated to do so by the heroic example of Miss Alt and Madam Schneider and the pressure of foreign opinion. This was partly due to the fatalism of their outlook, to the resignation of their temperament, and partly to the disorder which was rife throughout their military organi-

sation. As far as San Stefano is concerned, which is the small area I had the opportunity of observing personally, had it not been for the spontaneous efforts of Miss Alt, Madam Schneider, and Mr. Frew, the Turkish soldiers who were shut up in the cholera camp at San Stefano, without any possibility of egress, would have died of hunger and thirst. And it must be remembered, as I have said before, that among the cholera patients there were a great number of soldiers who were suffering simply and solely from exhaustion and starvation.

After the arrival of the British unit of the Red Crescent and that of the Egyptian Red Crescent, matters were got into shape at San Stefano, and there was no longer need of volunteers. The worst cases had died. Those who had been suffering from exhaustion and starvation recovered and were

sent home. Those who had mild attacks of cholera and dysentery became convalescent, and were moved into the tents. Rooms were cleared out for the very sick, and it was possible to introduce beds, and to clear up matters. And what was at the beginning an ante-chamber to Hell has been now, I believe, converted into a clean hospital with all the necessary appliances and attendants.

That this was done was due to the initial enterprise of Miss Alt and Madam Schneider. They were the leading spirits and the soul of this undertaking. Their work was untiring and incessant. To have seen Miss Alt at work was a rare privilege. Impervious to disgust, but saturated with pity, overflowing with love and radiating charity, she threaded her way, bowed with age and with silvered hair, like a good angel or a kind fairy, from tent to tent, from

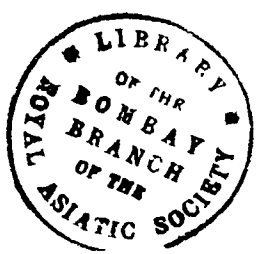
room to room, laden with gifts; unconscious of the filth, disdainful of the stench, blind to the hideous sights, she went her way, giving with both hands, helping with her arms, cheering with her speech, and healing with her smile. Miss Alt came to San Stefano like an angel to Hell, and she could have said, like Beatrice:

> 'Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
> Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
> Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale.'

After working for several days like a slave from morning till night Miss Alt broke down, and had to be sent to the British Hospital in Constantinople, where it became plain that she had contracted a severe attack of cholera. Later on Madame Schneider also succumbed to the disease. Fortunately both the ladies recovered, but they have been left in a broken-down and destitute condition, and it is hoped that

their heroism will be recognised in a tangible way both in England and in America, for as I write a fund has been opened for them by Lady Lowther at the British Embassy, Constantinople.

THE END



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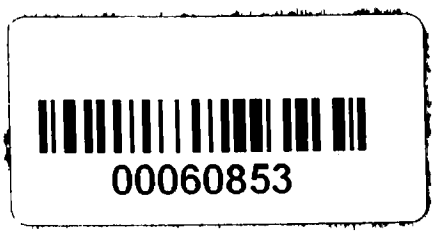

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